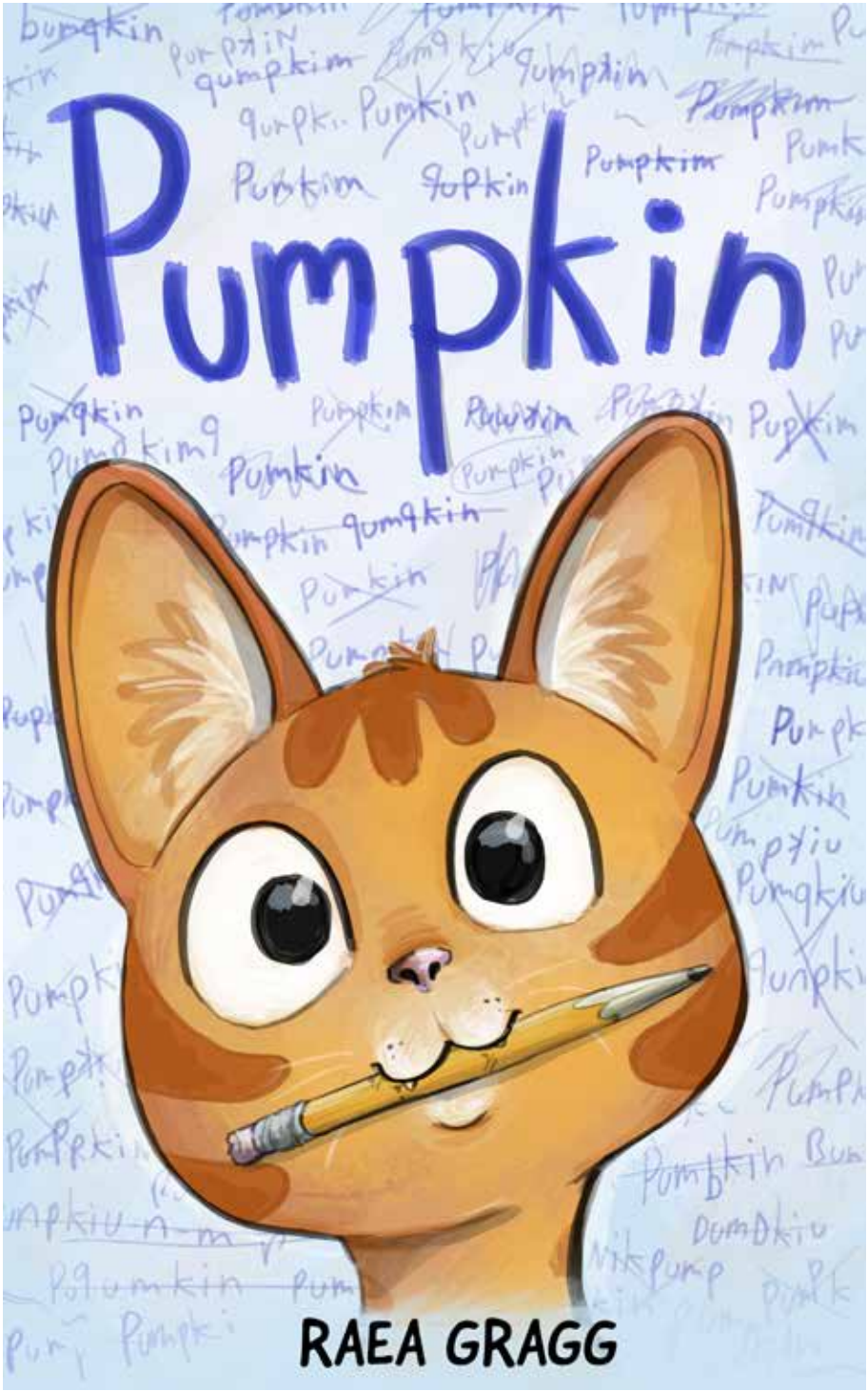
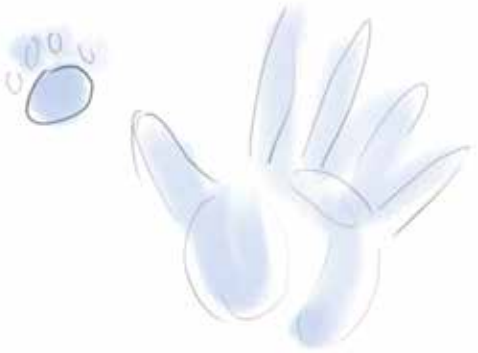

Pumpkin
RAEA GRAGG

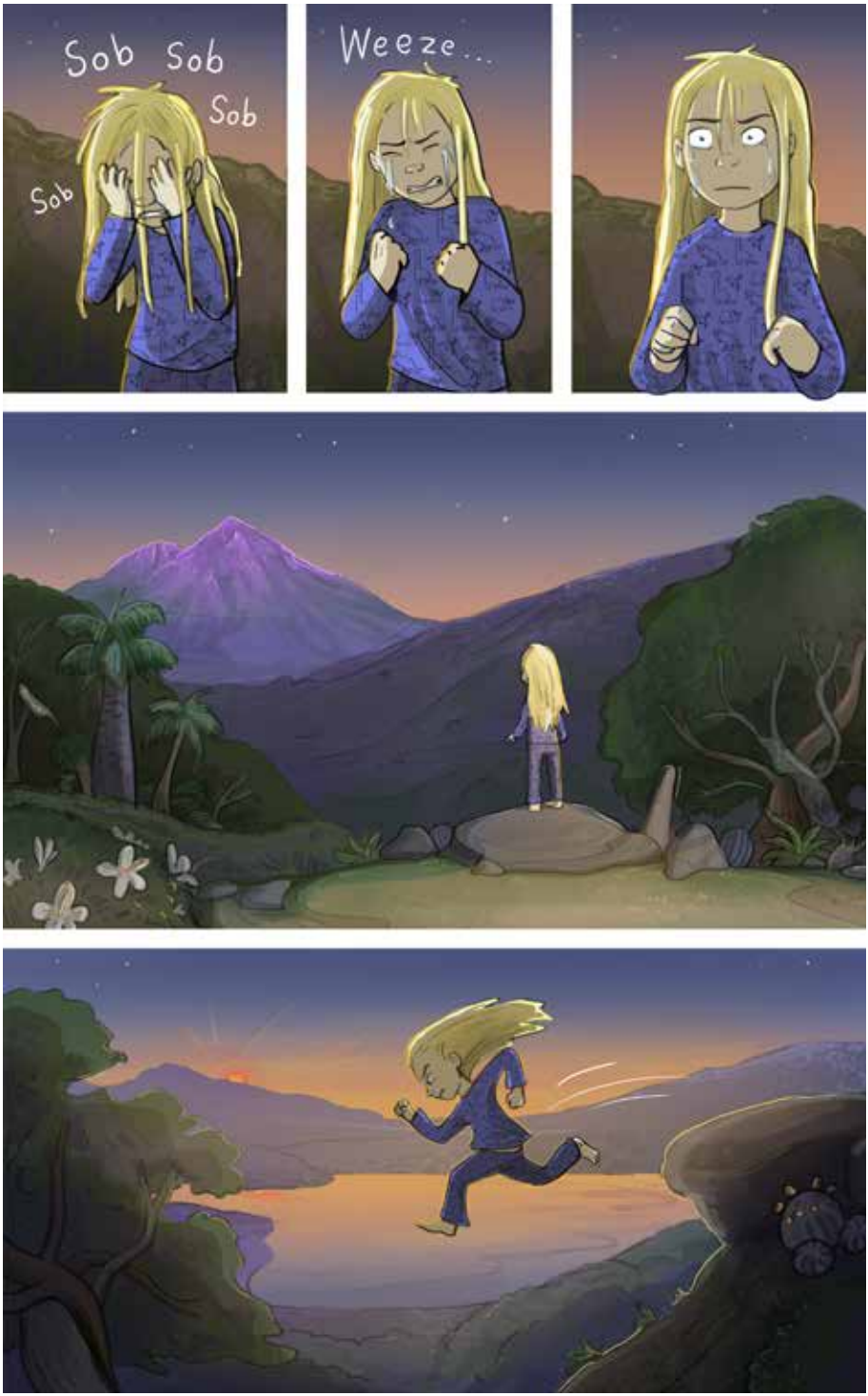
For my best friend

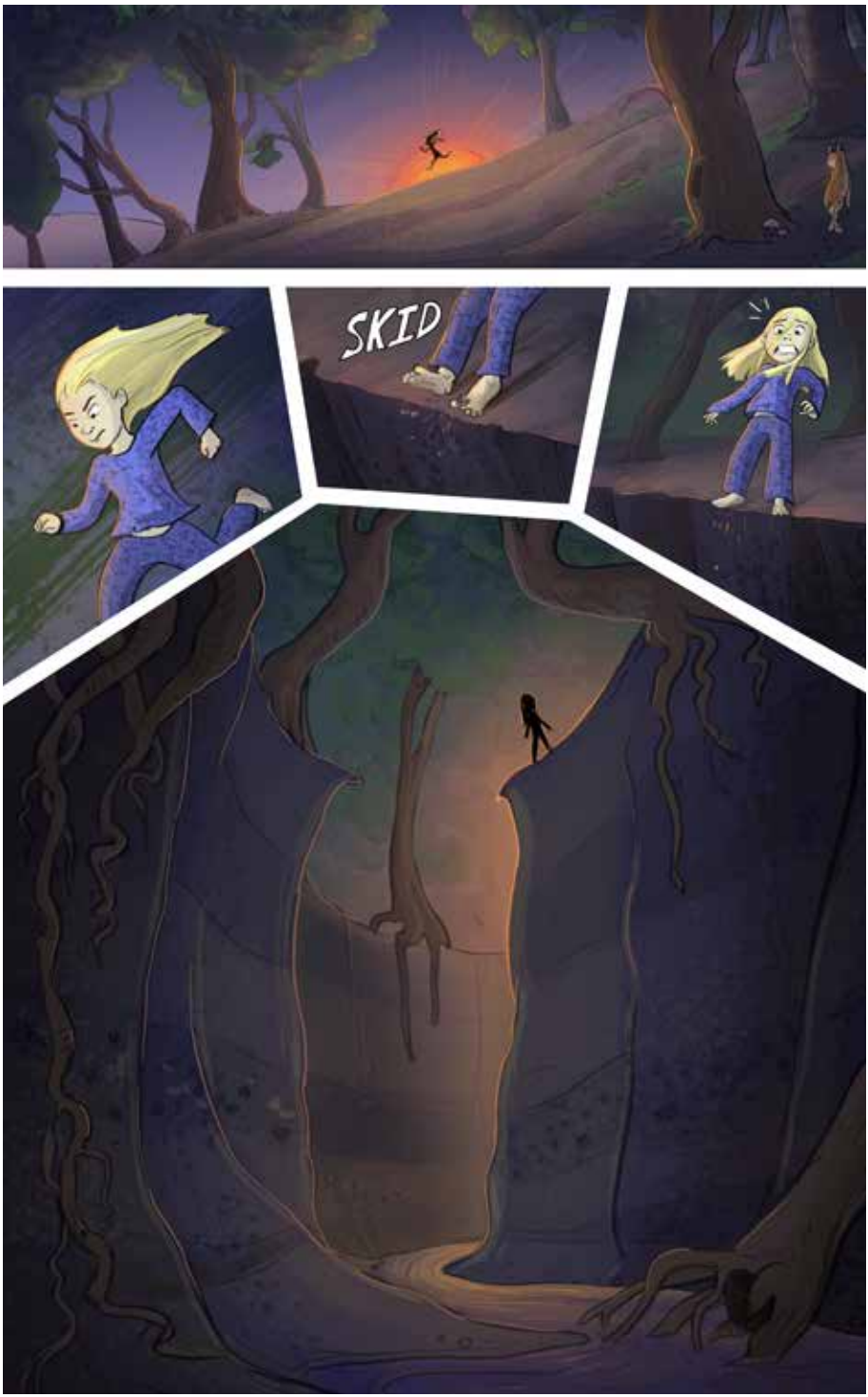


Raea, what does this word say?
Tue girl was extraordinary!
Tue girl was extraordinary!
I don't know.
Rupunz
That's okay... try sounding it out! Ready?
EX-TRA-ORD-IN-ARY.
Raea!
Rupunzel

RAEA! Wait, it's okay!
Mom, why can't Raea read?
Sigh
Did she run off again?
Maybe... she needs a goal... something to incentivize her.
I have an idea!

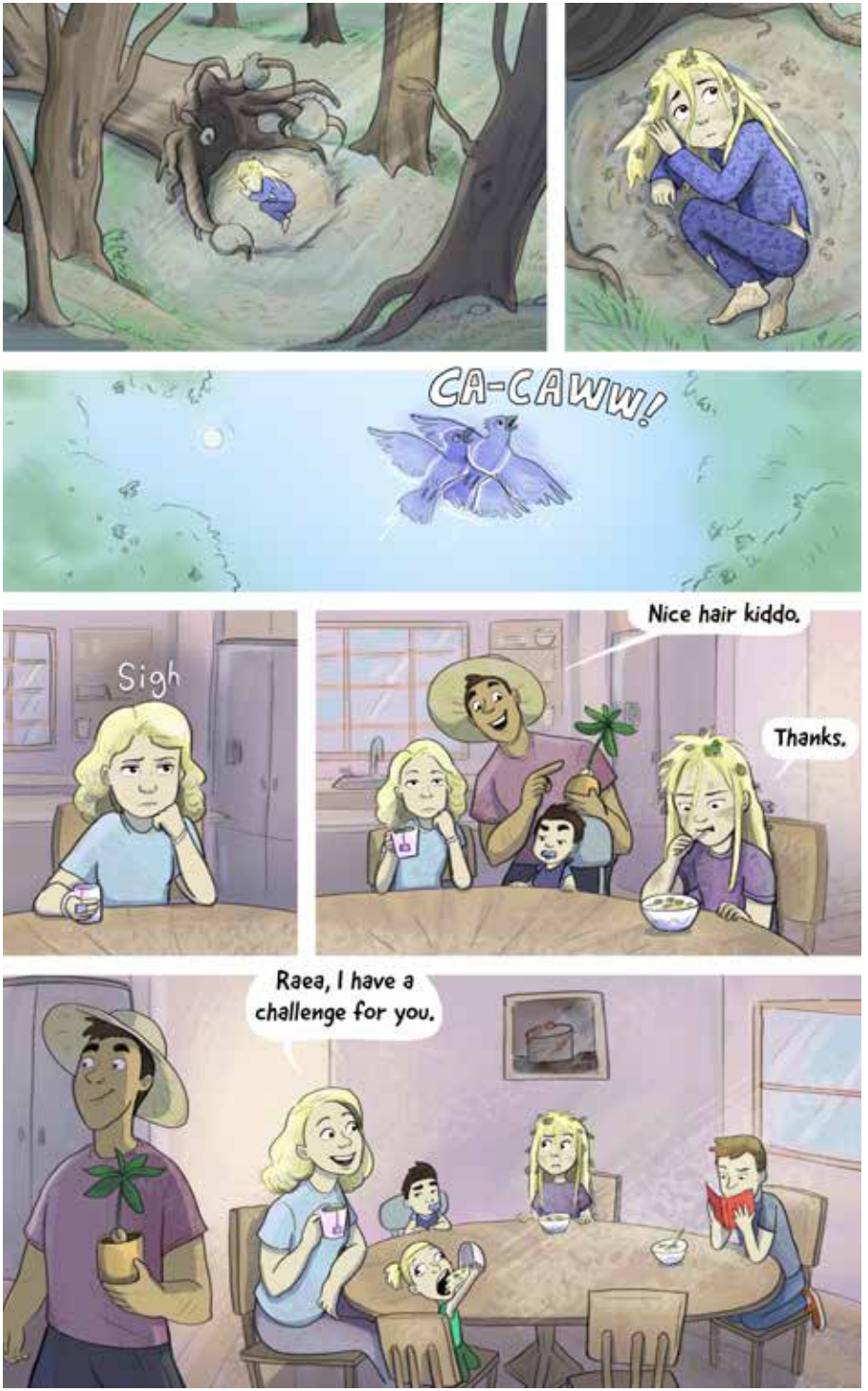
SLAM!
Rustle Rustle
Mew!
Mew?


Sob Sob
Sob
Sob
Weeze...


SKID

I can do hard things!
AHHHHHH!
yes!

Huh?
Mew!
What is it?
Oh my!
MEW!
Hi, I found these kittens in a dumpster, can you help them?
Mew!
Yes, our animal shelter has volunteers who can foster them until they're old enough to be adopted.
Dog of the week
HUGO


CA-CAWW!
Sigh
Nice hair kiddo.
Thanks.
Raea, I have a challenge for you.

If you read 100 books...
...then you can get a pet!
WHAT
I can read 100 books right now! Can I get a pet too?
I've read THOUSANDS of books!
No, this challenge is only for Raea.
GROAN
NOOOO
Now, is everyone ready for school?
Wow! A pet? What kind should I get?

RIIINNNNGGG
Ugh... school.
Have a great day Raea!
SPECIAL EDUCATION
What's with you today?
Poke Poke
I have to read 100 books!
WHAT? Ew! Why?
If I read 100 books my mom says I can get a pet!
NO WAY!
You need to read 100 books then!

I know... but HOW? It's:
IMPOSSIBLE
I can't read.
At all.
...
Well... don't read then.
WINK!
GIRLS. Eyes on the whiteboard please.
Hmm.

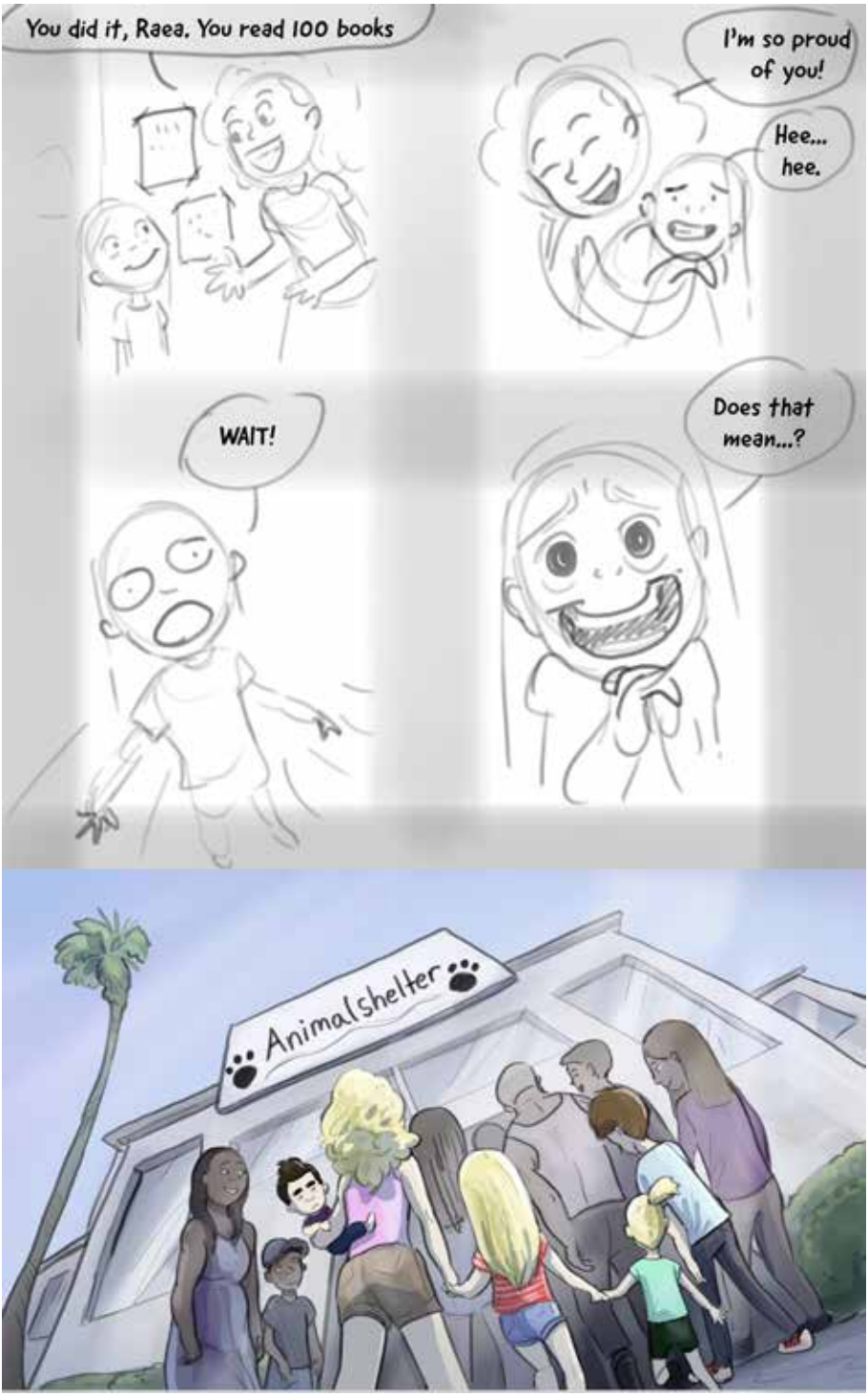
Samantha! We just got a new batch of babies. Are you up for more fosters?
Of course I am.
Mup!
Leave me Alone!

rrrr--
Purrmaid
Who Lived in
Hi, ocN capoople
Race
+
Hip!
JARED!
Hee
Hee
Hee
SIGH
Jared, I need your help.
Can you read this to me?
I'm a SHARK!
Chomp!
Chomp!

Okay FINE. There once was a cat named...
...Purrnoodle.
Who lived in his own Capoodle.
Nice job Raea! You read a book!
Raea's Books

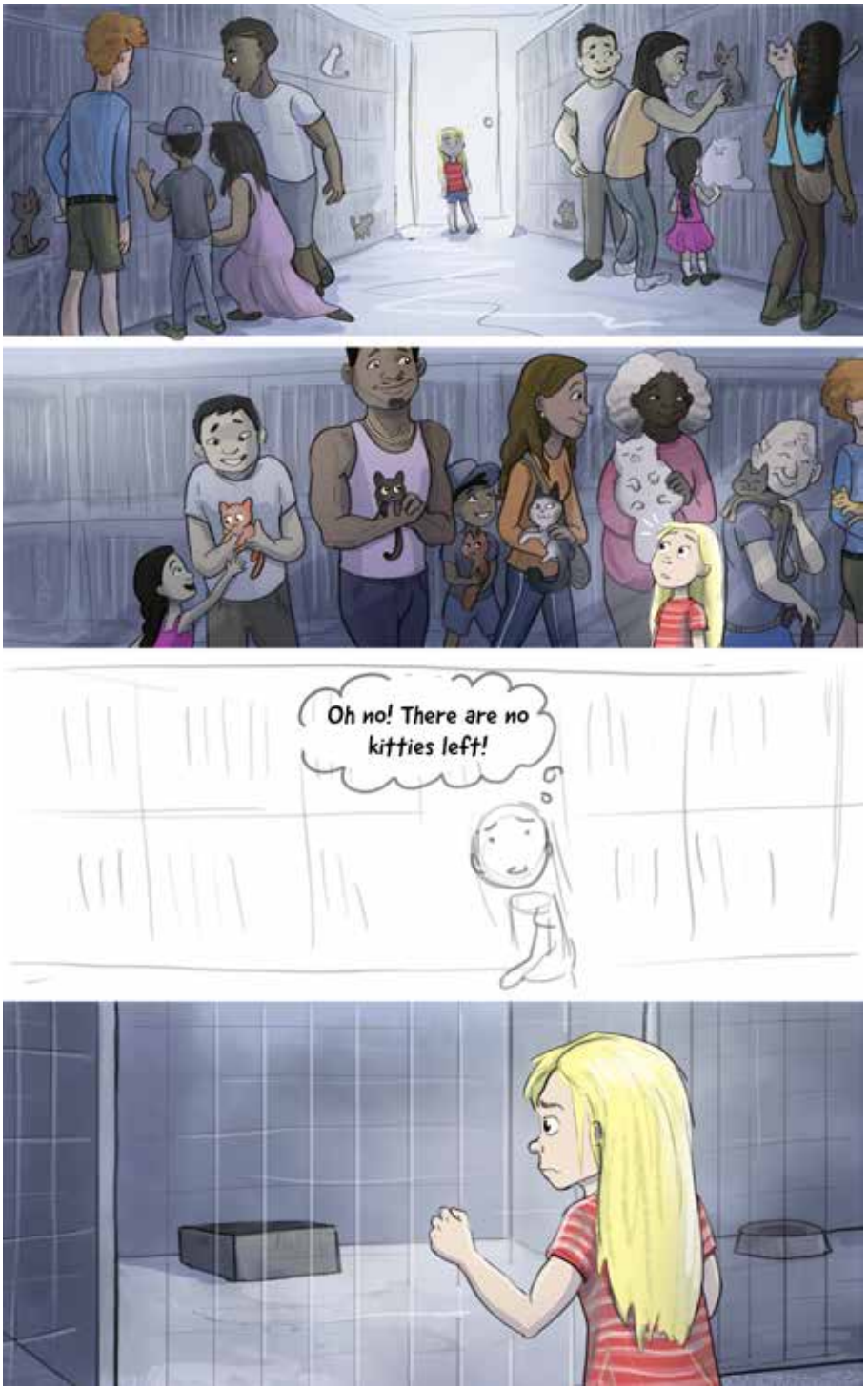
Why, you have a heart of gold, don't cha?
You have so much to look forward to, little fella.
You're going to grow up and someone is going to fall in love with you and take you home.
Now, you've got to promise me something, sweetheart....
That person is going to be very special so make sure you love them with all your heart.
Mew!

Jared...
GROAN.
Just one more!
Um... Little coconut...
The Three Bears...
Raea's Books
Skippidy-skip-skap!
Raea LOOK!
and they lived happily ever after.


You did it, Raea. You read 100 books
I'm so proud of you!
Hee... hee.
WAIT!
Does that mean...?
Animal shelter

furr-ever Home.
No.
ADOPT
TODAY!
Dog of the week
Lucky
WHAT?
Mom?
AAAK
YAY!
I don't think your family is a good fit for one of our animals.
Bang! Bang!
Your... family well, it's a bit... loud.

Ur....
um... C, A...
uhh... T.
CATS
?
CATS
Oh!
Cats!


Oh no! There are no kitties left!

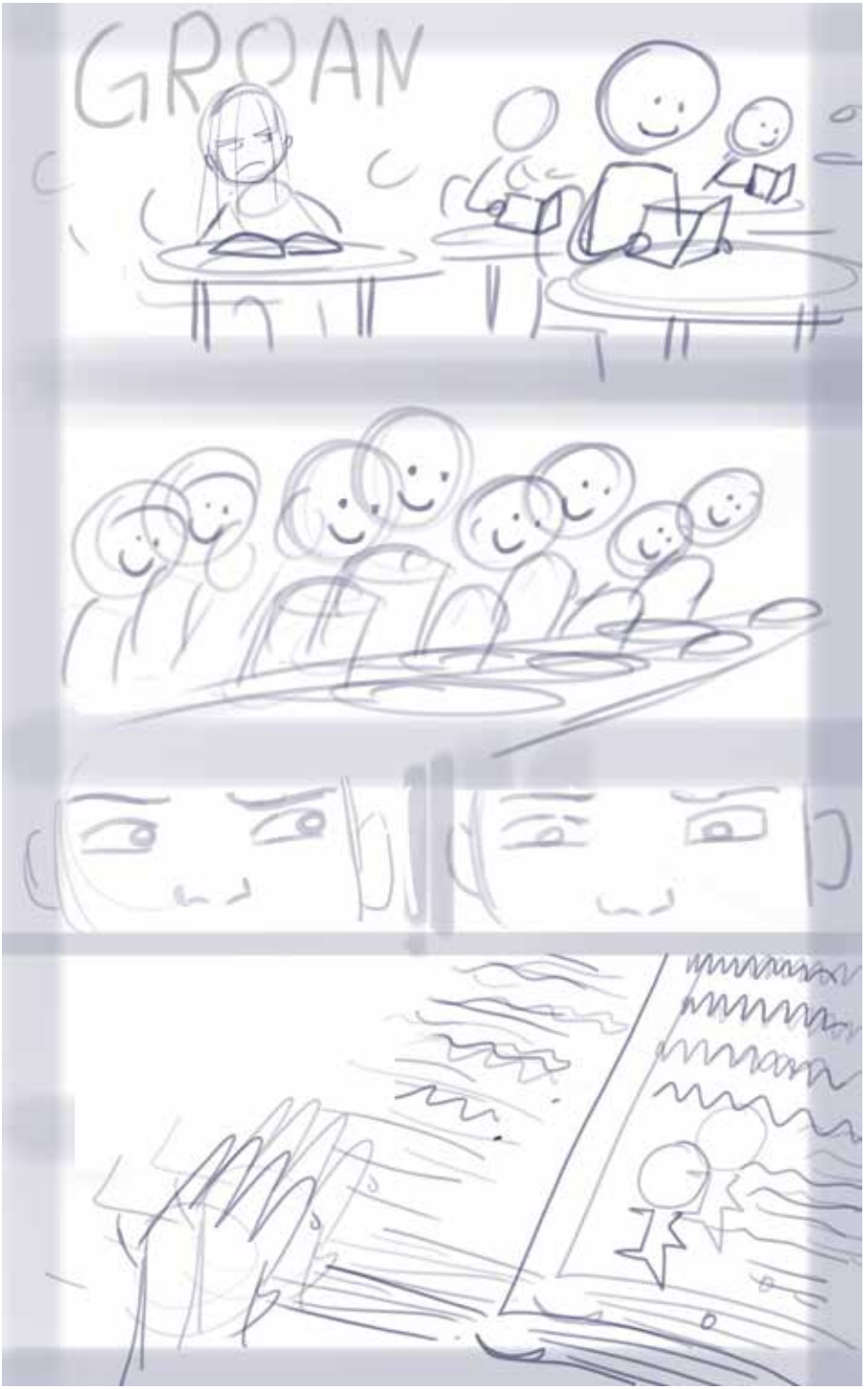
Sigh.
MEW!

Hi.
Mew!
Well, well, well, you must be a very special girl.
Because he is a very special boy.
Can you promise me something?

Can you take care of him?
I promise.
So, what are you going to name him?

Pumpkin
This is our room!
Raea + Mup
That's Mup's bed and
this is our bed!
And...
...this

is the...
CANYON.
You will love it, I promise.


GROAN

PUMPKIN! I'm HOME!
Meow!
HEY!
Wait, Raea! You need to do your homework!
HA HA HA!

HEY COYOTE!

ROAR!
ROAR!
YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT!
You leave Pumpkin alone!
HSS!

RAEA! Sit down!
Focus please.
Raea!
Raea!
Raea!

She's just different.
Hee Hee Hee
BAP BAP
She is not like the other kids!
I think there is something wrong with her! She is just having such a hard time.

We have to figure it out so we can help her!
RAEA! CATCH!
SMACK!

Oh no! Raea!
Wow, she didn't catch it!
It was an easy catch.
Ow.
Your mom is here to pick you up now.
Huh?
Wait... I can LEAVE SCHOOL?
I can't wait to see Pumpkin!
Mrs. Gragg, have you tested Raea for ADHD?

HIP-HIP HURRAYYY!
I'm home early!
MEOW!
RAFA!
Poof!
Poof!

What is it?
We're going to see a specialist.
Can Pumpkin come?
No Pumpkin has to stay here.
She has all the symptoms: can't focus, refuses to pay attention, won't sit still, avoids classwork.
I'd recomend medicine for her.

groan
Sigh

SMACK!
I fell off the swing!
nurse office
Hello, Mrs. Gragg? Yes, Raea needs to be picked up early again.

I don't feel good.
COUGH!
COUGH!
short
weez
I stubbed my toe!

Ms. Deasy?
My tummy hurts. Can I go to the Nurse's office?
Hee Hee Hee

My tummy hurts.
Mmhmm.
Go back to class Raea.
SIGH

Sniff Sniff
What is this?
Medicine to help you with school.
It will help you pay attention in class.
Raea you are doing such a good job focusing!
Twitch Twitch

Meow?
Twitch Twitch
NO!
I'm not going to take that anymore! It makes me a zombie!
Raea...

Why do I have to go to school?
Sigh
Because learning to read and do things like math is really important.
I like P.E. !
Mom's right. School is invaluable. Plus, reading is fun!
Well, I HATE SCHOOL!
RAEA!

Mew?

sniff sniff
sniff
Mew?
I don't understand why I have to go to school.

Why do I have to learn how to read?
It's a waste of time!
MEW!
Yeah! YEAH! That's right Pumpkin.
You're right!
I'll show them how useless it is!
MEW!

All right, Raea it's your turn.
Please write three sentences using their, they're and there.
No.
No?
No, it's imposible! I'm never going to learn how to read and write.

Everyone can learn, even you Raea.
Just give it a try.
Fine. But I'm trying it my way.
THERE WAS A CAT
See... you have to leave lots of extra space...
...for when the words move.

I think Raea needs to see an eye doctor.
But I took her to a pediatric ophthalmologist two years ago and she has 20/20 vision.
Special Education
Well something is definitely wrong with her vision.
I can't wait to see Pumpkin!
Wait, Raea, we are going to an appointment.
WHAT? Another doctor?
Groan

Hello
hmmm....hmm...
hmmmmm...hm
Look at this pencil please.

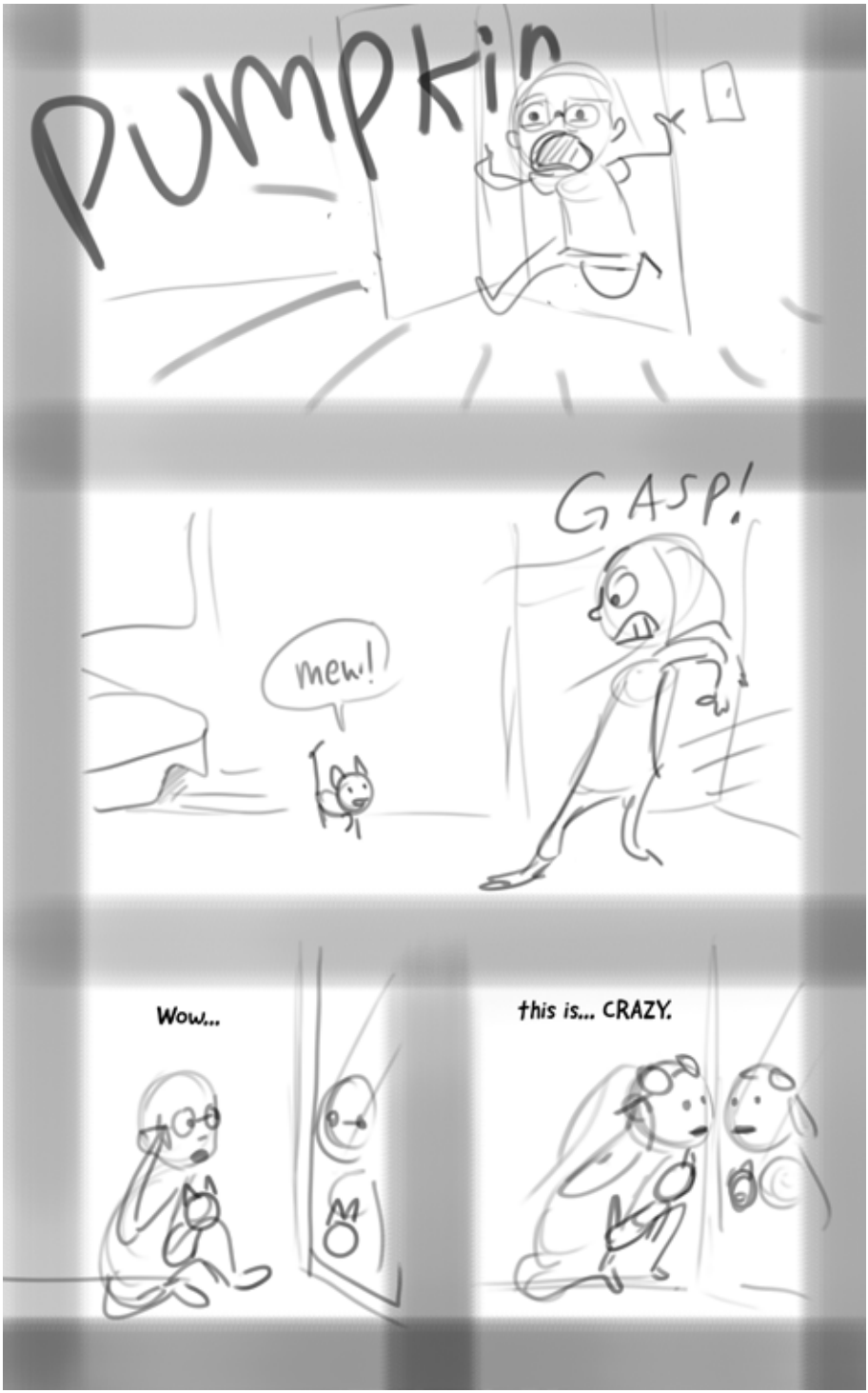
She has convergence insufficiency, or in more simple terms: double vision. One of the worst cases I've ever seen. I can't believe no one caught this.

With a year of vision therapy.

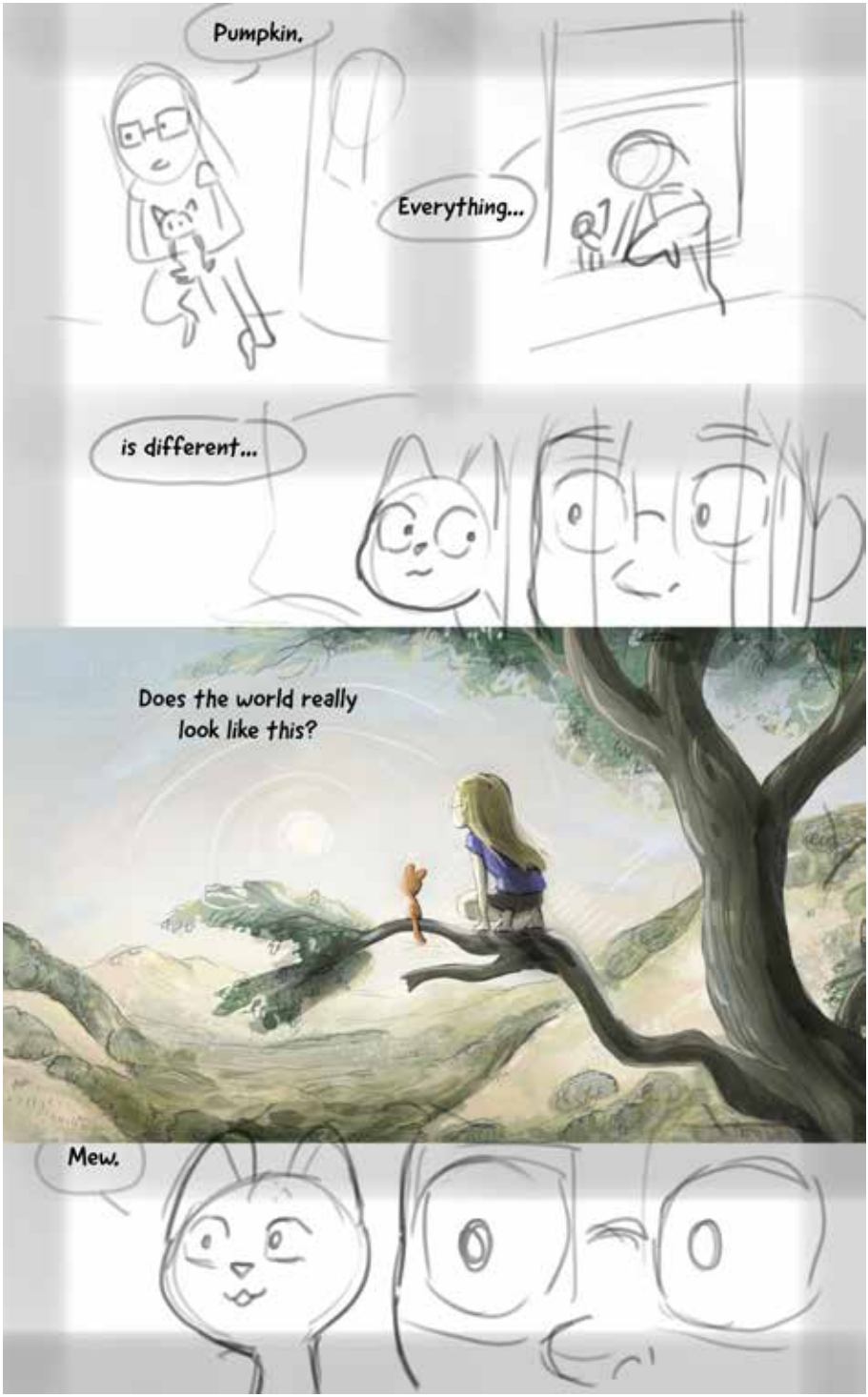
And prism glasses.

She should be able...

...to see normally.


Pumpkin
GASP!
mew!
Wow...
this is... CRAZY.

I always thought we looked like this.
BUT WE ONLY HAVE ONE NOSE?!
MEW!

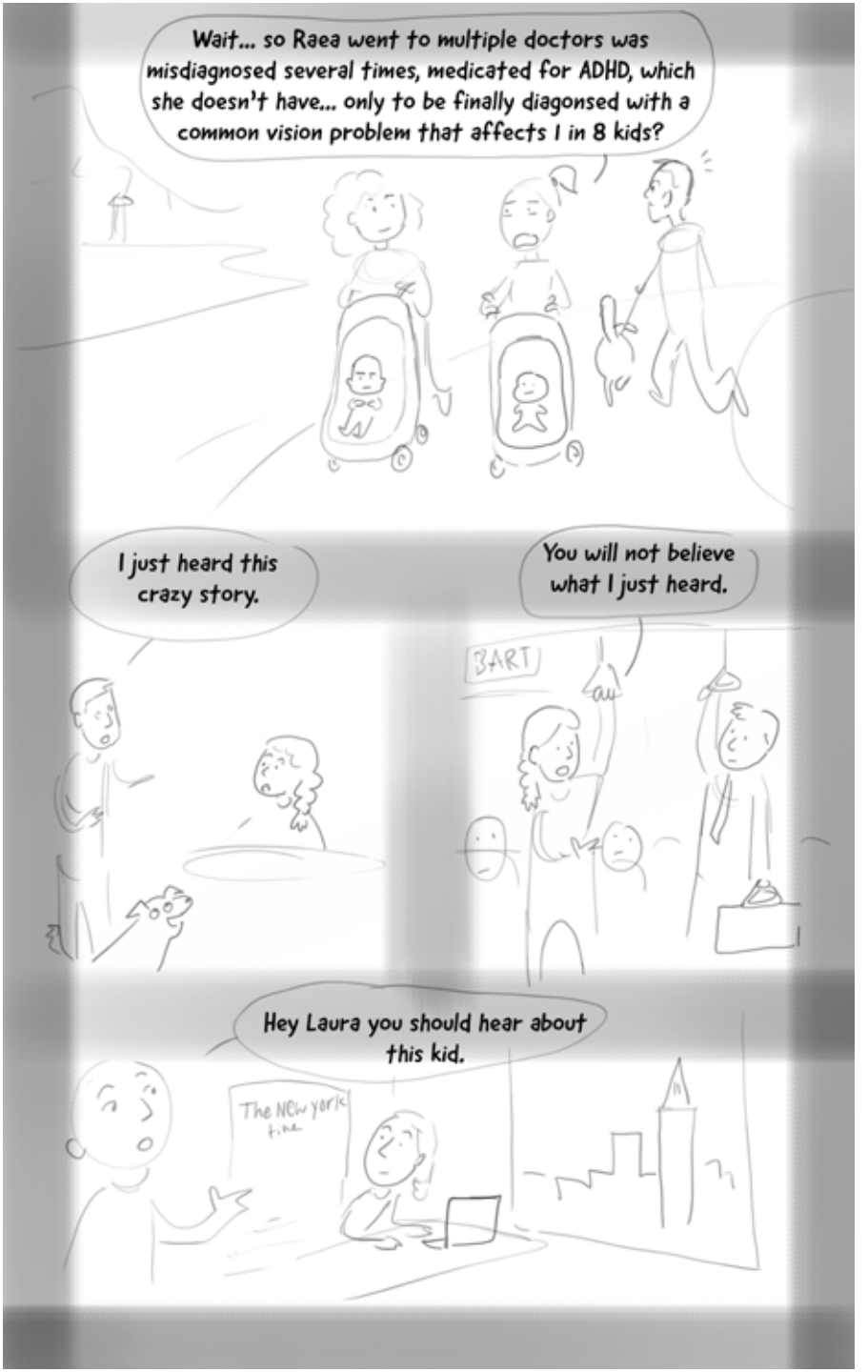

Pumpkin.
Everything...
is different...
Does the world really look like this?
Mew.

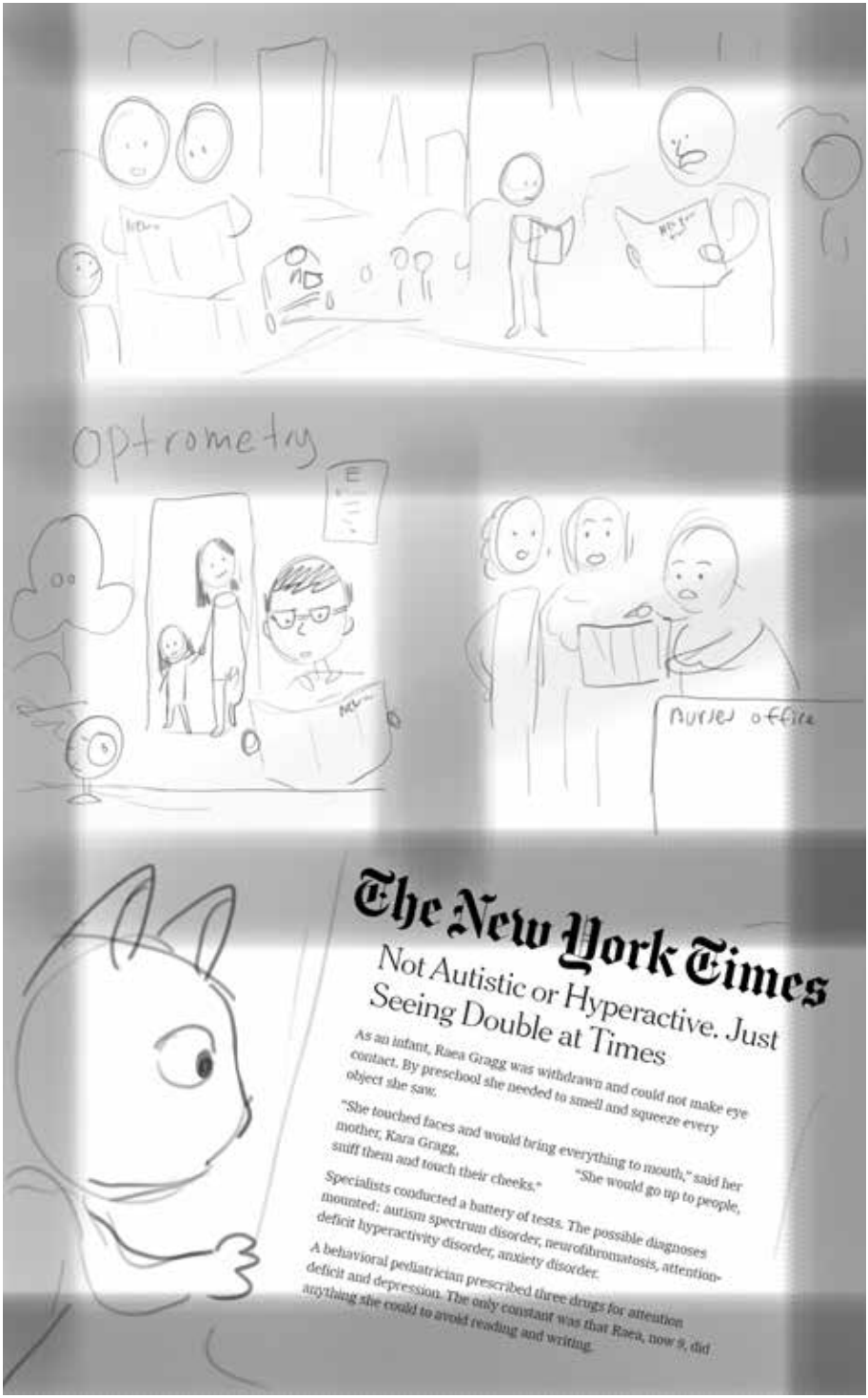
To structure a paragragh
first you need too...
Scribble
Scribble

Ring!
Ms. Deasy, look! I drew my cat Pumpkin!
That's lovely Raea.
Why don't you add it to our art wall.
really good
It's not that good.
Pumpkin!
Clatter
Clatter

HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
Chomp!
Chomp!
Smack!
Smack!
POUNCE!
I drew a picture of you at school today.
And, well, it wasn't very good.

What? You want me to draw?
BAP BAP
But... I'm not a good drawer. I just learned how to see!
Mew!
Okay...
I'll give it a try.


Wait... so Raea went to multiple doctors was misdiagnosed several times, medicated for ADHD, which she doesn't have... only to be finally diagonsed with a common vision problem that affects 1 in 8 kids?
I just heard this crazy story.
You will not believe what I just heard.
BART
Hey Laura you should hear about this kid.
The New York Time


optometry
E
nurse office
The New York Times
Not Autistic or Hyperactive. Just Seeing Double at Times
As an infant, Raea Gragg was withdrawn and could not make eye contact. By preschool she needed to smell and squeeze every object she saw.
"She touched faces and would bring everything to mouth," said her mother, Kara Gragg. "She would go up to people, sniff them and touch their cheeks."
Specialists conducted a battery of tests. The possible diagnoses mounted: autism spectrum disorder, neurofibromatosis, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorder.
A behavioral pediatrician prescribed three drugs for attention deficit and depression. The only constant was that Raea, now 9, did anything she could to avoid reading and writing.

"Raea didn't know wou to desɔdrɔ it pecause that's all she's ɓʌɓɪ. ʞ nown," her mother said. "She felt like she had been telling us lla along that ɔɹɹɐ couldn't see, but nopody listened."

I have a special story for you today. I'm here with nine-year-old Raea Gragg.
After years of misdiagnosis.
Raea is finally being treated with a seeing disorder called convergence insufficiency.
Aproximailty 13% of all school age students have C.I. but it usually goes unnoticed.
But now, thanks to her vision therapy and glasses.
Raea will be able to see and learn how to read.

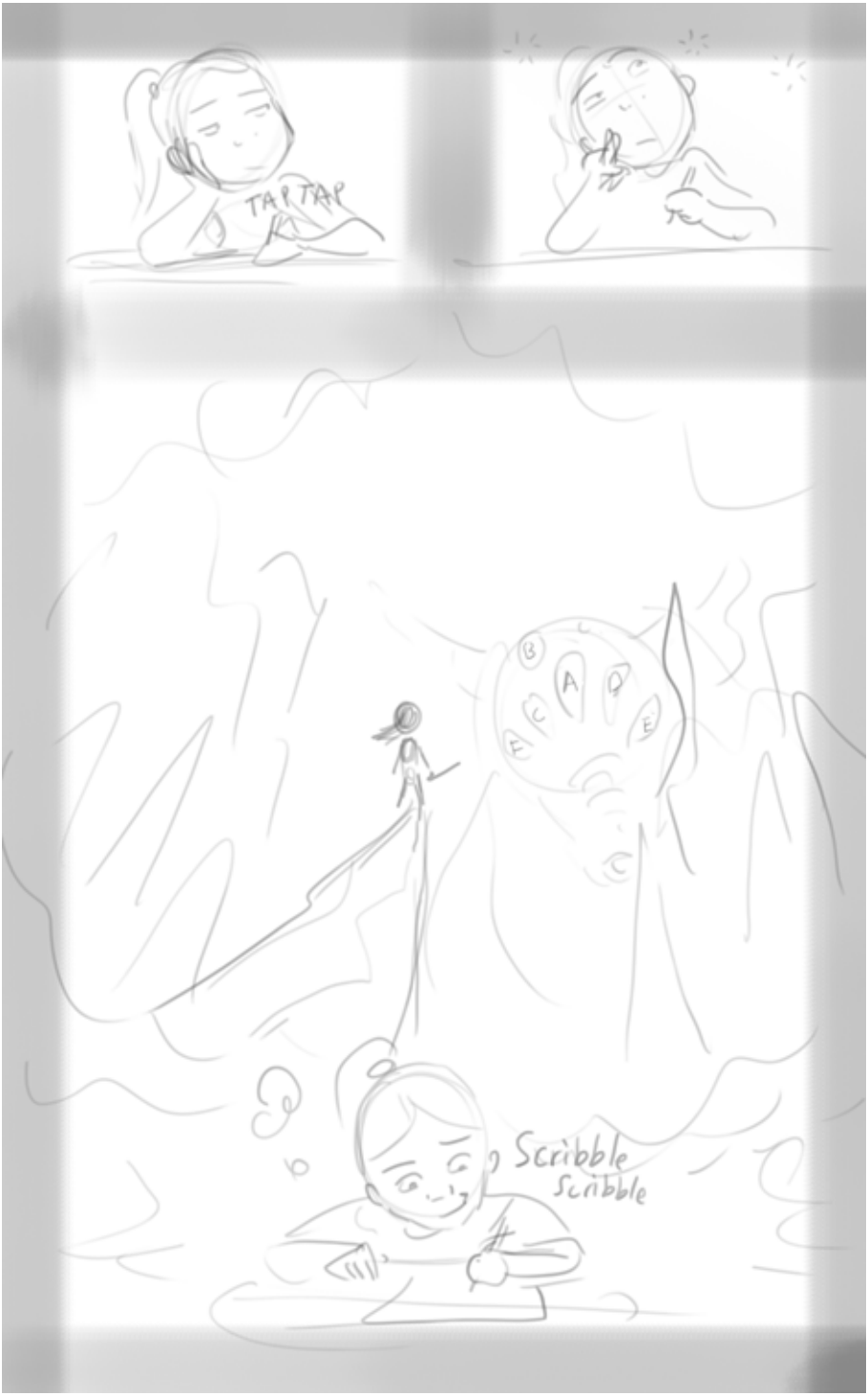
MEOW
I'm up! I'm up!

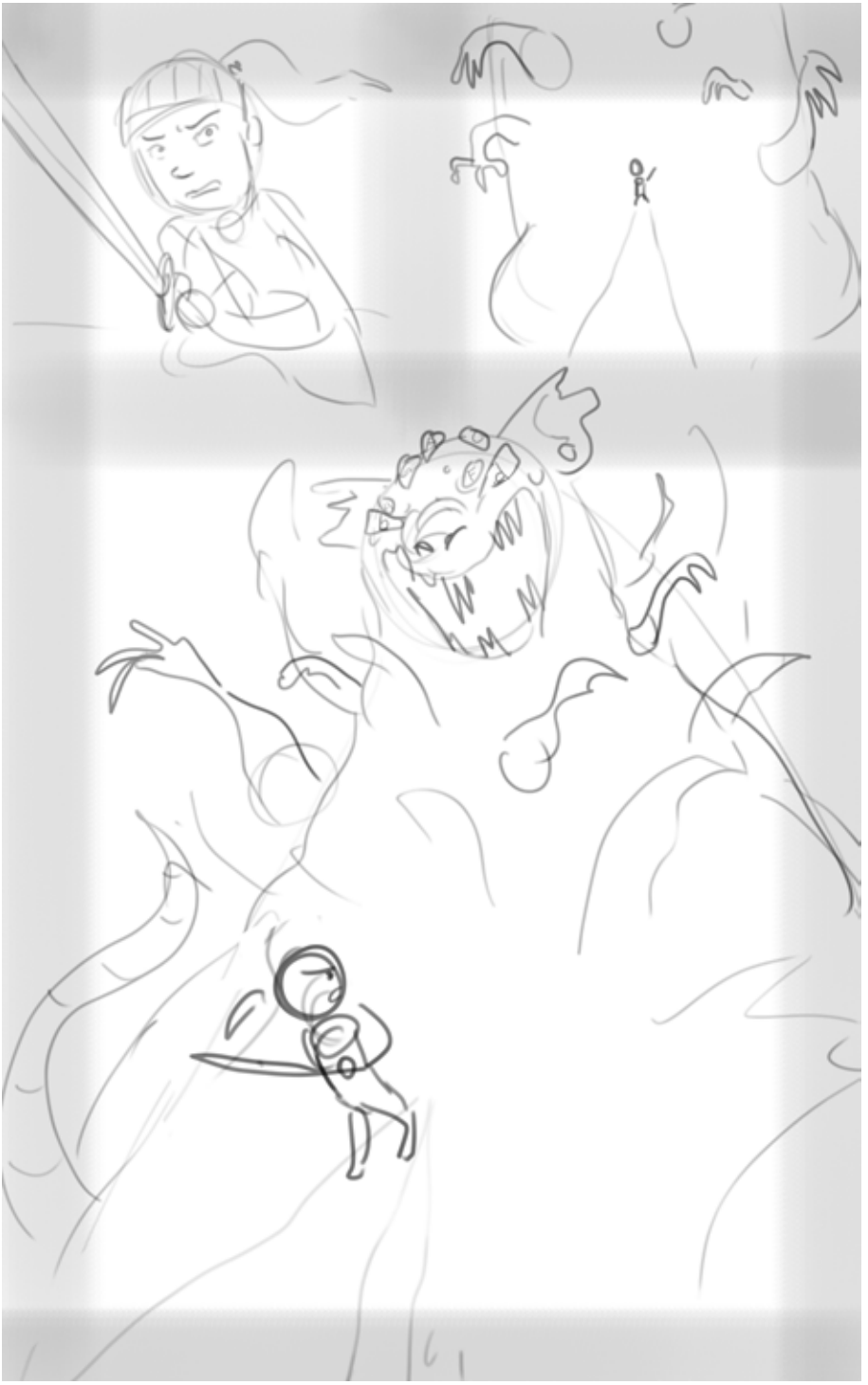
Okay!
Here you go!
Pumpkin
I love you bud, see you after school.
Raea, come on!
Hee Hee Hee
We don't want to be late...
...for school.
Middle School

Let's go!
AHHHHH!
swerve!
swerve!
Oh... no.

Gobble!
Gobble!
Gobble!
Gobble!
When will you be able to ride a bike like a normal person?
I guess... when I become a normal person.
RING!
STANLEY Middle Sch

SIGH.
Book Reports


TAP TAP
Scribble
Scribble



A
B
K

Hee! Hee!
Raea!
Book reports!
You're up next!

Thank you Johny for telling the class about Victor Struse's, "The Living Legend of a Thousand Legions of Dragonsborne"
All right!
Raea what book did you pick for this month?
Book Report

My book is "Peek-A-Boo Goo" by Sandy Summers.
Oooooo
Picture books are for babies
That's not a chapter book!
Can she even read?
Class, quiet down please.

UGH! I can't wait to go home! School is the WORST!
It's not so bad. I love learning new things.
Well, that's because you're smart Jared!
Thanks!
You are too you know.
I'm... uhhh....
AHHH!
I don't think so.

MEOW!
Hey Pumpkin.
I had a bad day.
Everyone is so far ahead of me!
Everyone learned how to read in kindergarten. But now here I am trying to read and I'm twelve!
It's not normal...
I'M not normal.

Meee-owwww!
HA! HA!
HA!

Pumpkin!
PUUUURRRR
You big goofball!
Hmm, I guess we are both not normal, Huh?
MEOW!
I love you Pumpkin.
Purrr
Gosh, when did you get so chonky?

MEOW!
Well... would you rather walk?
mar-ow...
Poke
Poke
Huh, I thought so.
You know what would be cool?
If we had our own spot in the canyon.
A special spot for just you and me. A spot where I could tell stories and we can draw together and it will be just the two of us.

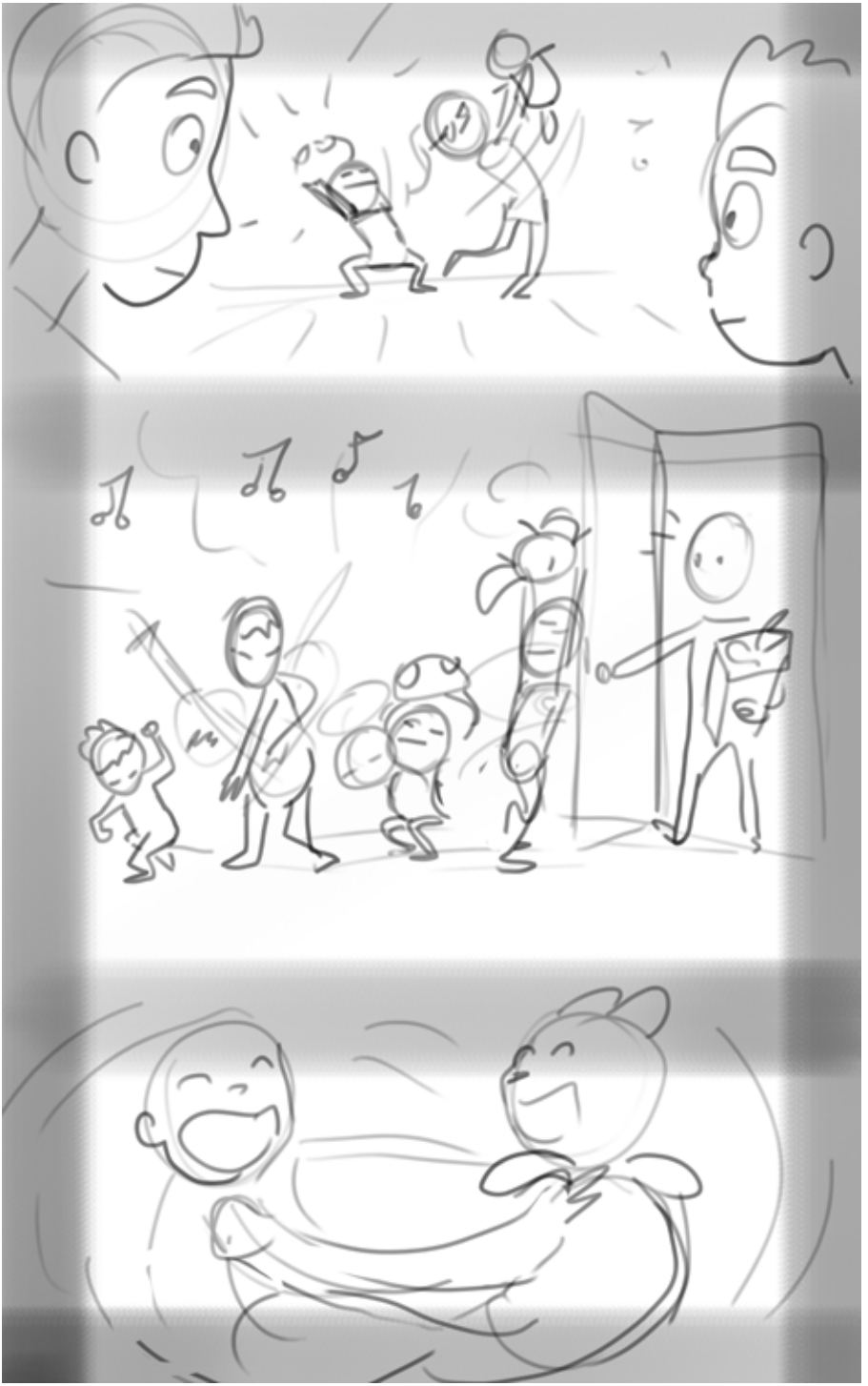
Let's build a treehouse studio!

Wow! Look at all this cool stuff!
Who knew we had so many art supplies!

MOM! Look at all this stuff I found in the closet!
These art supplies were your grandmother's!
Nanny?
Awesome! These supplies will be PERFECT for the treehouse I'm building!
Nanny would love that!
Pumpkin?

SMACK!
plop
MEOW!

It's beautiful!
Pumpkin, we did it!
Now, there is only one thing left to do.
Celebrate.



School LiBRARY
Okay everyone! Go pick your book for this month!
Yuck.
FIIP
So many words...

Disgusting.
SNAP!
Picture Books
Chapter Books
Picture Books
Hey Raea, can I show you something?
Sigh

We have a new section in the library!
Comics and graphic novels!
Diary of a wimpy kid
Flip

Pumpkin! Check this out!
It's a whole book but with drawings and words!
I might actually be able to read this.

Mmmfphm
Mmm
Mm!
Urg...
Sigh
IT'S TIME!

Nunchuck
Cool! A comic!
Comic
From Mom
Thanks Mom and Dad!
Don't worry I got you something too.

Here!
Take a look!
It's catnip!

Sniff
Sniff
Uhhh... Pumpkin, you alright?
HEY!
Pumpkin!
Crazy cat!
Oh... no...

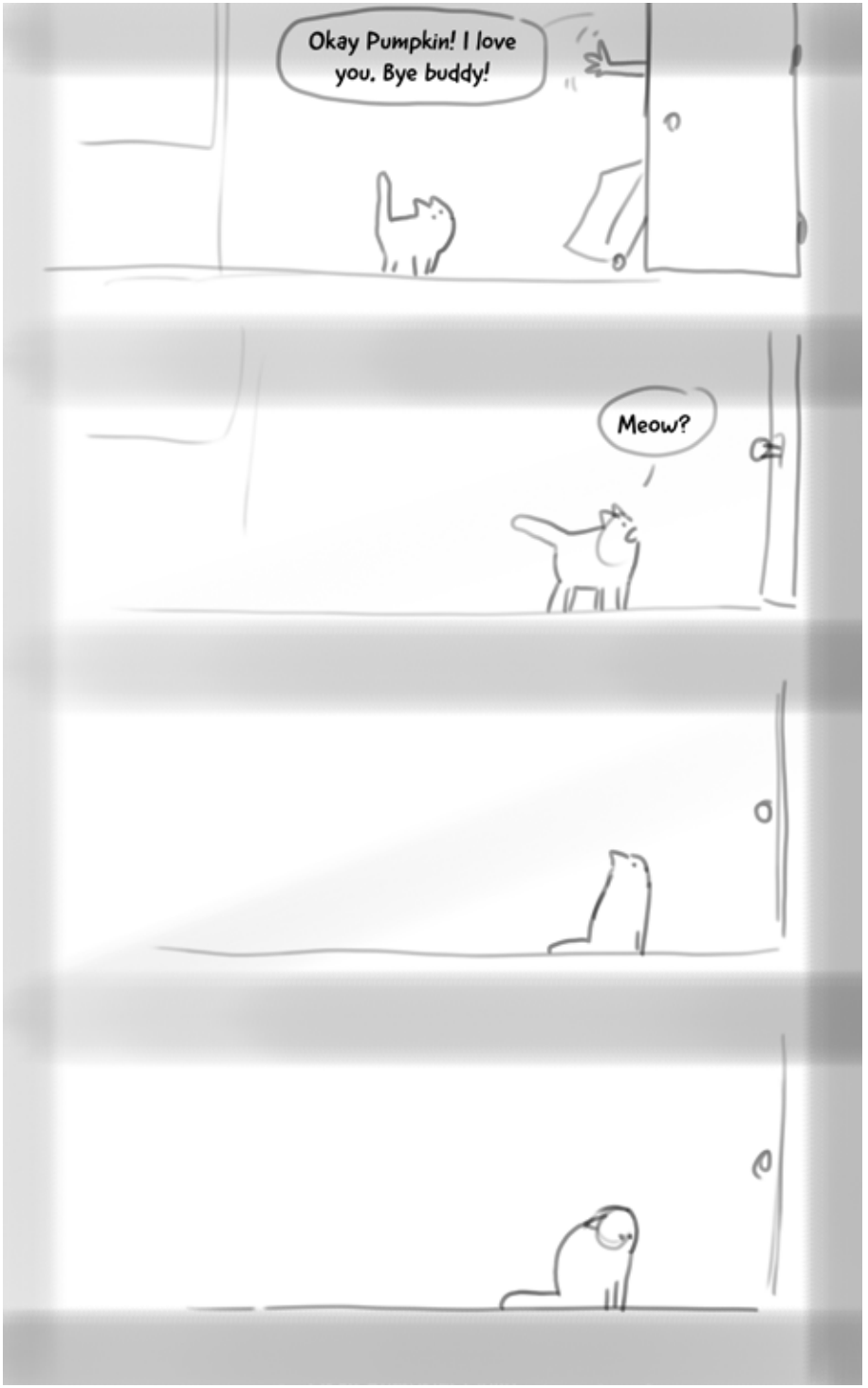
Should have seen that one coming.

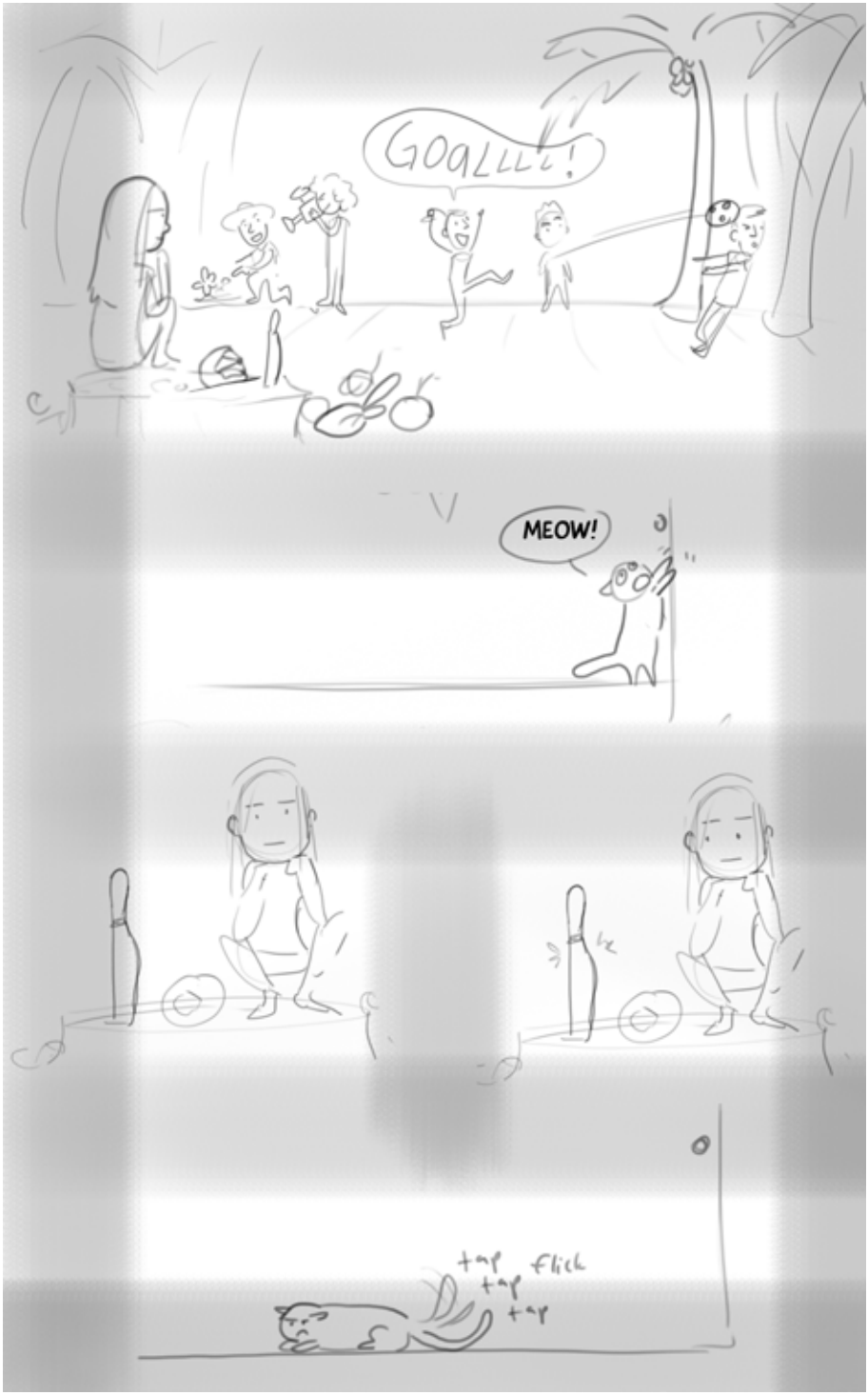
Book Reports
CLAP CAP
CLAP
Hey Raea!
Hi Mom!
You know, I don't think I've seen you read this many books since your 100 book challenge!
Oh yeah, well that was easy!
I just memorized a bunch of books and "read" them to you.
Wait.... you MEMORIZED them?

Well I'm ACTUALLY reading now. It's still hard but...
But, you're doing it all on your own.
yeah...
I am.
but...
I've had help.
PURRRR
Scratch
Scratch
Well... I'm proud of you both.
Now, are you ready to go?

Rrrrrrr!
Offff!
SMACK!
Okay party people! Out the door! Out the door!
Mer-ow?

Oh... Pumpkin.
Don't worry bud.
Andrew, our neighbor down the street, will come over everyday to feed you.
AND! I'll be back.
I promise.


Okay Pumpkin! I love you. Bye buddy!
Meow?


GOALLLL!
MEOW!
tap
tap
tap
flick

SWISH

chop
swish
SWISH

Scribble scribble
Look Pumpkin a star!
Look Pumpkin a star!
I wish we could switch places!
I could Nap all Day!
STAY up all night!

I could sing!
And Dance!
and I could Do...
NOTHING!
And the BEST part!
I wouldn't Have to go to School!

But then that would mean...
YOU would have to go to school!
You would sleep through P.E.!
You would Lick yourself in class!
Ew!
meow! meow! meow!
You would be Loud!
Shhh! we are taking a test!
You would never do your homework
scratch scratch

Hmm...
I change my wish
I wish we never had to go to school and we could PLAY!
All DAY!

Sigh

PUMPKIN I'm home!
MAR-owww!
Hey bud, I missed ya!
Come mere' you chunk!
Purrr
I promised I'd come back.
I'll never leave you.

Advanced Lit.
Environmental Science
Algebra 2
shove!
SIGH

Grossss Bud.
Eh... I guess that's one way to water my plants...
kick kick

WHAT?
I can barely ride a bike!
How am I supposed to drive a car?
Raea, you're in highschool now and Dad was really nice to let you borrow his car.
But... his car is like a hundred years old...
You better get going. You don't want to be late.

Okay...
Okay....
I got this.
Umm... You sure?
Yeah, totally... I can do this.
AHHHH!
BARK! BARK!

I'm Sorry! I'm Sorry! I'm Sorry!
RAEA! SLOW DOWN!
My bad! Coming through!
WATCH OUT!
WHOOPS!
AHHHH!

Speed up Raea.
I'm TRYING.
Honk Honk Honk
NO! No! No! No!
Gobble
Gobble
Gobble
Ring!
We made it...
ACALANES H.S.

Me-me-owww!
Uhh... Raea
PUMPKIN?
Crazy cat.
How did you get in here?
I wonder what Dad will think...
Mew.
SIGH

F
Algebra
D-
I feel like you need at least a 3.7 GPA to get into any of the state schools.
that seems pretty low to me.
You really need straight A's to get into college.

Jared, what's your GPA?
Well it would have been a 5.0 if it wasn't for the A- I got in biology Freshman year. So it's only a 4.8 right now.
DANG! I only have a 4.0
That's still straight A's.
What about you Raea?
Umm... below a 3.0
YOU'RE FAILING?

I'm not smart enough to get into college.
My grades aren't good enough.
Everyone knows algebra but I don't know my times tables.
I haven't even learned how to type on a computer yet.

It's just so hard.
Trying to be like everyone else.
Meow!
Oh Pumpkin!

It's perfect.

On your marks...
get set...

Mah

Hi.
Mew!
Sorry bud, no hiking or painting today... too much homework.
Mar-ow?

BAM!
GO!
Go Raea!

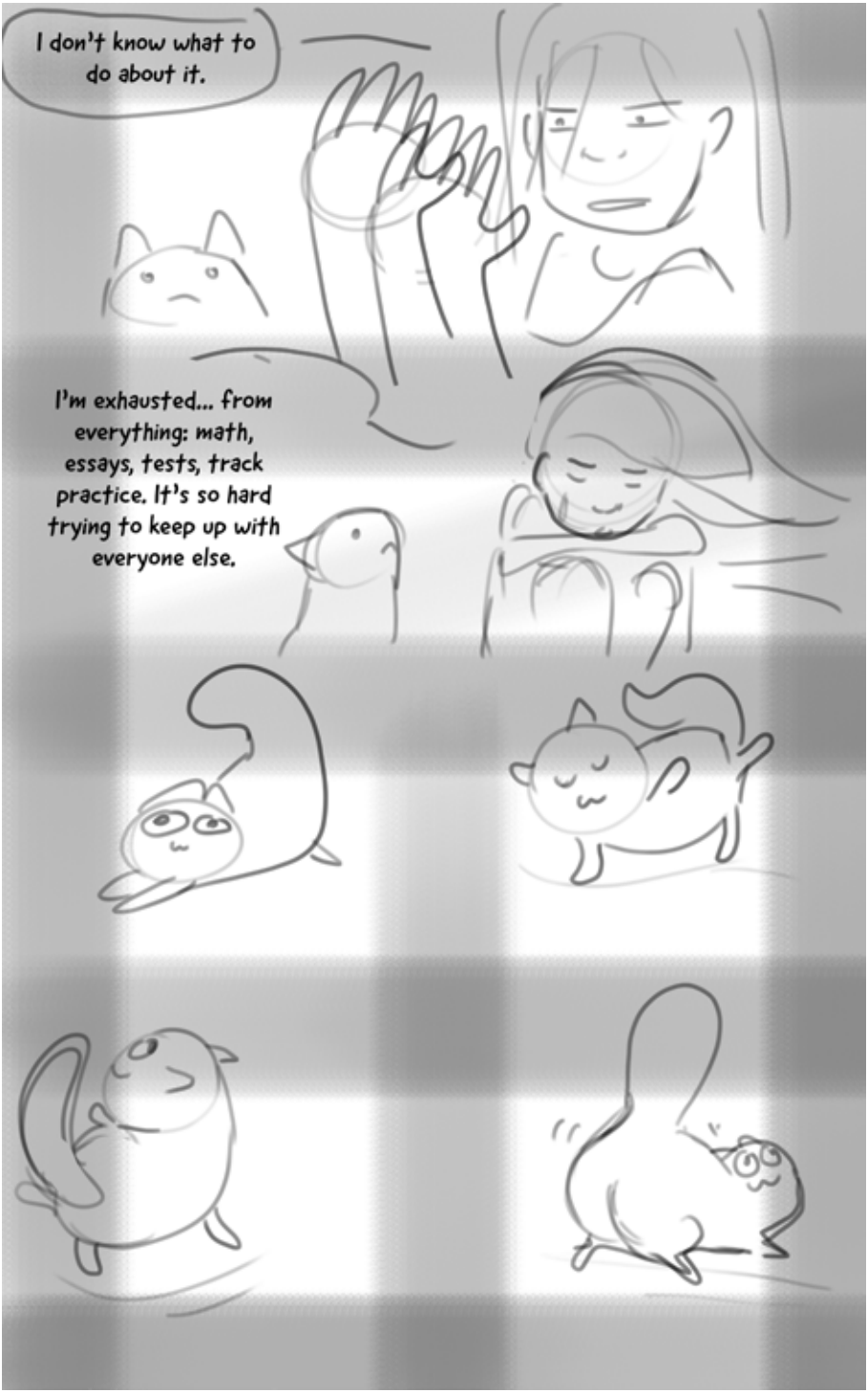
PROM?

Raea you look amazing!
Thanks so do you!
MEW!
Oh! This is Pumpkin.
Pumpkin say hi!
MAR-OWWwww!

I'm so sorry, you should have told me you were allergic to cats!
click click
I need... SNIFF... water...SNIFF

I'm going to study biology.
Cool! I'm going for nursing!
I'm going to study computer science.
Meow?
MEOW!
MEOW!
MEOW!
Mew?

Hey bud.
MARRR-OWW
Meow.
Mew
MEOW! Meow.
Prom was all right if that's what you're asking.
Except my vision problems are coming back...
Wow! I can't wait for college!


I don't know what to do about it.
I'm exhausted... from everything: math, essays, tests, track practice. It's so hard trying to keep up with everyone else.

Sorry bud, I just don't feel like dancing.

Raea, it's your turn to read.
Romeo + Juliet
Gulp

I know not... how to tell... um... thee who I am. Hateful to mee-self... and I written it. Um? I would tear a word.
Raea, that was incorrect.
Try again.
I know not how to tell you. Um... I know not how to tell you who I am.

GRoan..
HANG IN
THERE
You can Do it
every path is
Differend
youre Disabil
if your greate
ability
Hey Raea you need help with that?
Special Education
SPECIAL Education
It's tricky.
There... it's...
It's just such a mess.

Words never behave like they are supposed to.
Dyslexia makes it tough huh?
Hmm?
Mom... how long have I had Dyslexia?
Your whole life. You were born with it, but it took a while to figure out you had it after your vision therapy.

Why didn't you tell me?
You don't need to be labled, you're just you. You're perfect the way you are.
Okay... but what is dyslexia then?
Your brain has a unique way of thinking. Like I see a square, but you can see it turn into a cube.
It's an extremly creative way of thinking.

But since you see everything in every possible way it can be seen....
It makes seeing the difference between a lower case "b" and "d" very tricky.
Huh, well that explains a lot then.
So can we make it go away? The dyslexia? Like my vision problems?
No.
It's how you think and there's nothing wrong with that Raea.
But it's not normal...

Ooooo!
The track coach said three Ivy League college recruitors called asking about me.
That's awesome!
Way to go Mup!
I'm so excited to watch you girls run this weekend.

NOM NOM
Wait! Where is Raea?
She is probably in our room studying.

Mew.
Me-ow!
I was right.
There is something wrong with me.
The dyslexia and my seeing problems.

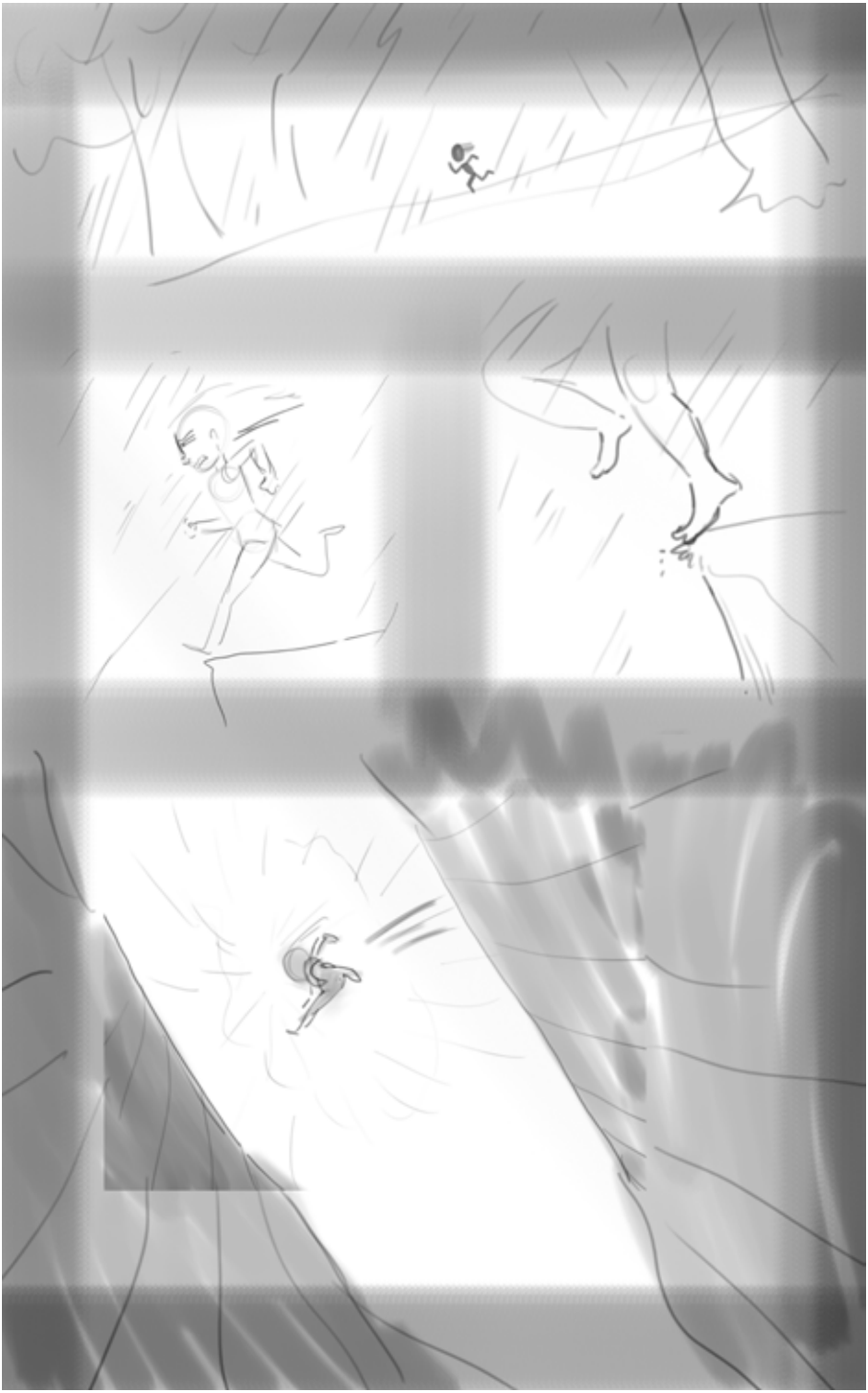
My whole life has been this race.
But... I'm just...
Different.

I will never be like everyone else.
I just... I just...
I can't do it Pumpkin.
I can't keep going on.
Mew?

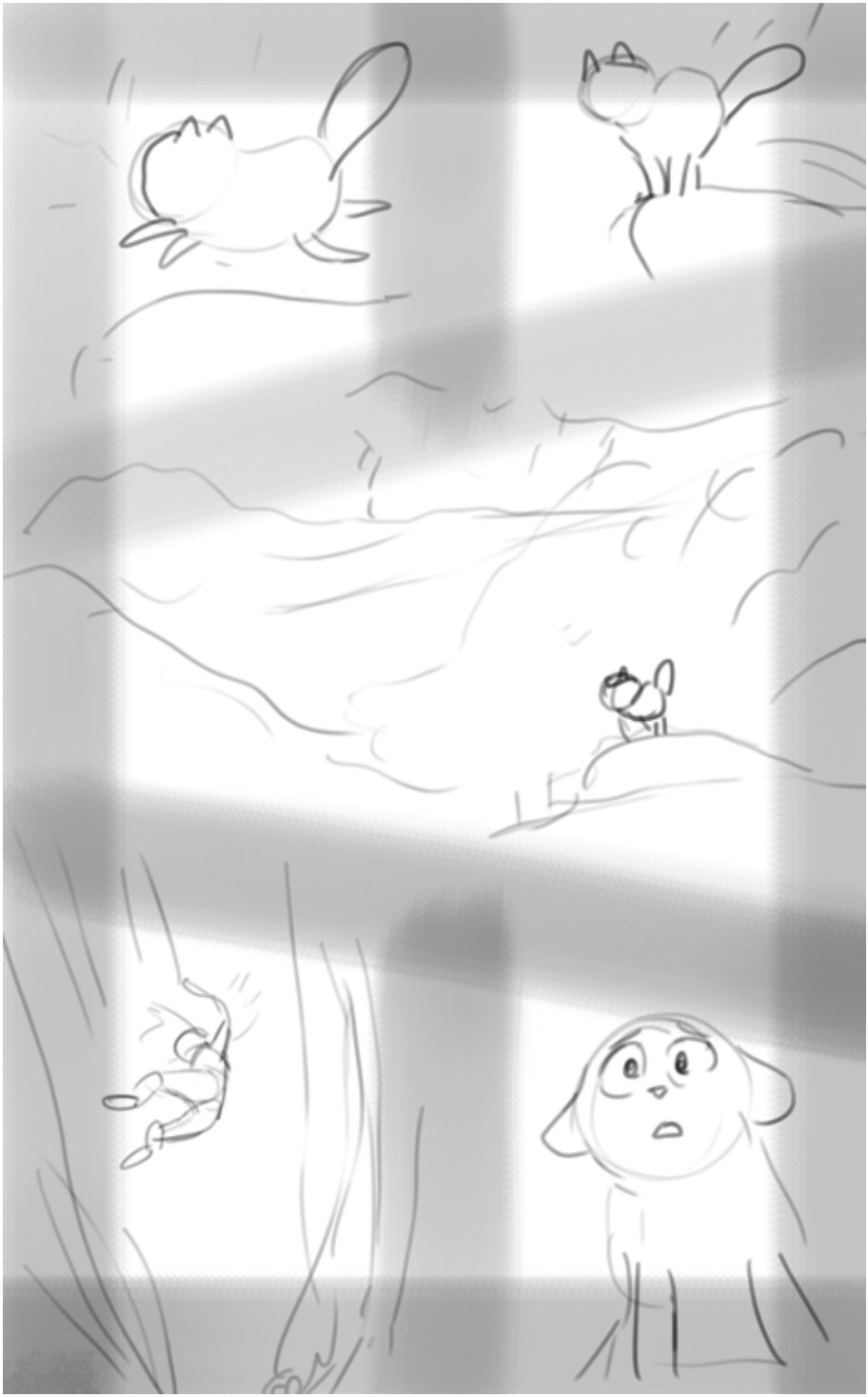
I'm done trying.
Meow?
Mar-ow?
I'M DONE!

I give up.
MEOW?
MOEW! MEOW! MMMMMMEEEEOO OOOOWWWWW!

MEW MEW MEOW MARRROWWWWW!
Pumpkin?
What is it?
HEY!
Crazy cat.



AHHH
SOB SOB
AHHH!



OFF!
SMACK

Mew?
Marr-ow!
MEOW!

Mew?
meow

You're not going to let me give up?
Are you?
Purrrr
FINE.
I'm up. I'm up.

But this...
changes nothing!
I'm still different.
I'll...
...never be normal!

I see things differently.
either from my convergence insufficiency.
My imagination.
Or my...
DYSLEXIA
MEOW!
You're right. At least I have you.

You know, Pumpkin... you're the only one who listens to me.
Listens to all my crazy stories.
It would be interesting to share some of those stories.
That would require me writing a book or something...
imagine that... ME of all people.

MAR-Oww!
Um... Pumpkin, I learned to read five years ago and it's still a struggle! Plus, I can't type. And grammar forget about it.
Plus I HATE BOOKS (except comics)
MARR-OWWW!
It's impossible.
Meow!!!

I don't know Pumpkin...
Mew!
Okay... well, there is no harm in trying.
I can do hard things.

All right
Round two.
Optomitrist
You know, you are the first patient I've ever seen with convergience insufficiency to have to come back for more vision therapy.
But don't worry.
We'll get is this time.
TAP
TAP

YASSSS Raea!
TAP
TAP
TAP
Report card
C- Math
A- Ar
B- Bio

Guess what!
I'm passing all my classes and I got an art award!
That's amazing Raea!
Oh! You know what? I haven't checked the mail yet.

Let's go bud!
YES!
212
The first copy!
The Fixer
I did it! I wrote A BOOK!
Doesn't surprise me! You are the most creative person I know!
Good job Raea!
Noooiiicceee.

TL

Raea, I love your book!
I haven't finished it yet! No spoilers.
I can't believe you wrote a whole book.
You were right, Pumpkin!
Everyone loves my stories.
I used to be the girl that couldn't read or see and now I'm an author and artist!

All I did was try... try to do something I previously thought impossible.
Raea!
What is it?
Look! You've been taken off the waitlist!
CONGRATULATIONS
welcome to our
University!
You got into college!
Meow?

Colles

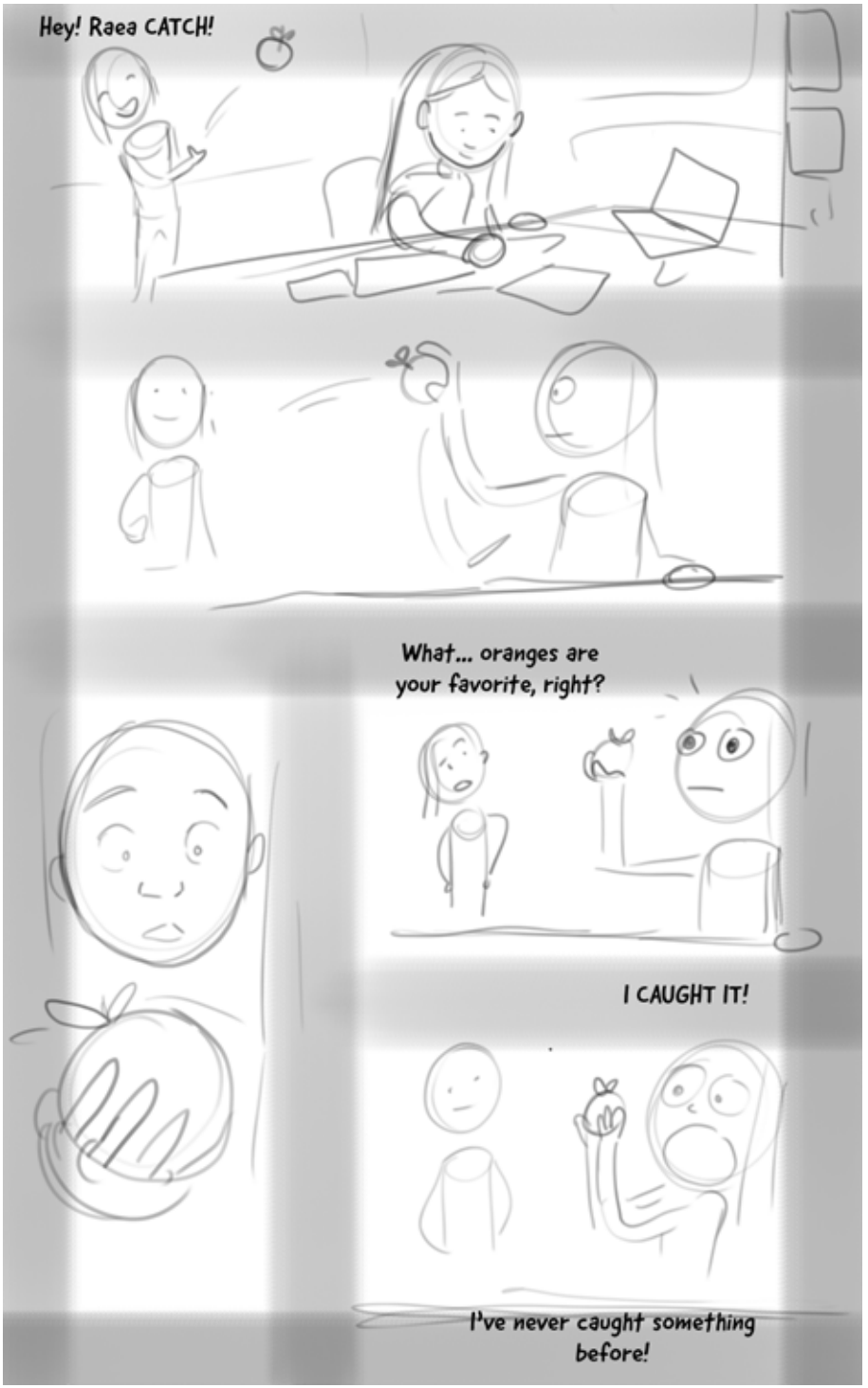
Is that everything?
Think so.
college
All right let's hit the road.
MEOW!
Pumpkin?
Meow!

Oh buddy...
Mew!
Come here...
sniff
sniff
Purr
I'm so sorry.

I'm going away Pumpkin.
Goodbye.
I love you.

meow!
MOEW!

CUTE!
Is that your cat?
Yeah, that's Pumpkin.
Want to go to the cafeteria for dinner?
Sure, let's go.


Hey! Raea CATCH!
What... oranges are your favorite, right?
I CAUGHT IT!
I've never caught something before!

I'm surprised I caught this becouse my hand eye coordination is awful from growing up with vision problems!
Wait... you had vision problems?
I wonder what else I can do now.
Uhh... goodluck?
?
THANKS!

I can do hard things.
click

YES! I did it!
tour
Excuse me! Are you a student here?
Yes?
This is my son. We are touring your school today and wanted to ask...
...how did you get in?

Uhh... what do you mean how I got in?
Like what were your test scores and GPA?
My tests scores were pretty bad.
and my grades were not great.

GASP!
WAIT! How did you get in then?
tow

Kick!
So, you want to know how I did it?
I told this school the story of how I never gave up on myself, even when I wanted to. I kept trying and I kept doing what I loved to do.

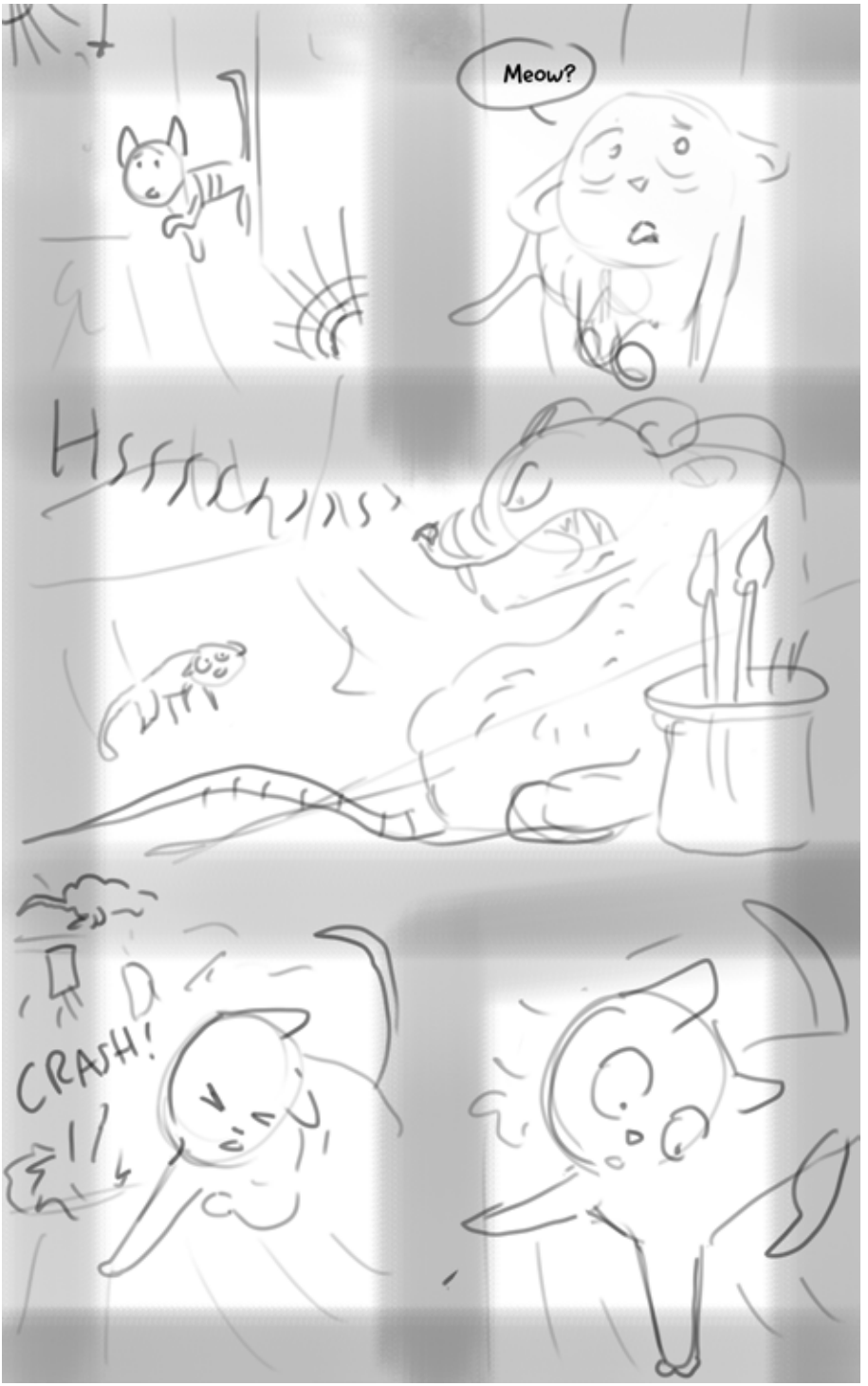
So I guess this school read my story and decided to take a chance on me.
Hollyhead

BUZZ
BUZZ
Raea
Hey Raea.
Hey Mup, could I use your name and personality for a cartoon character?
MEOW?
Uhh... sure.

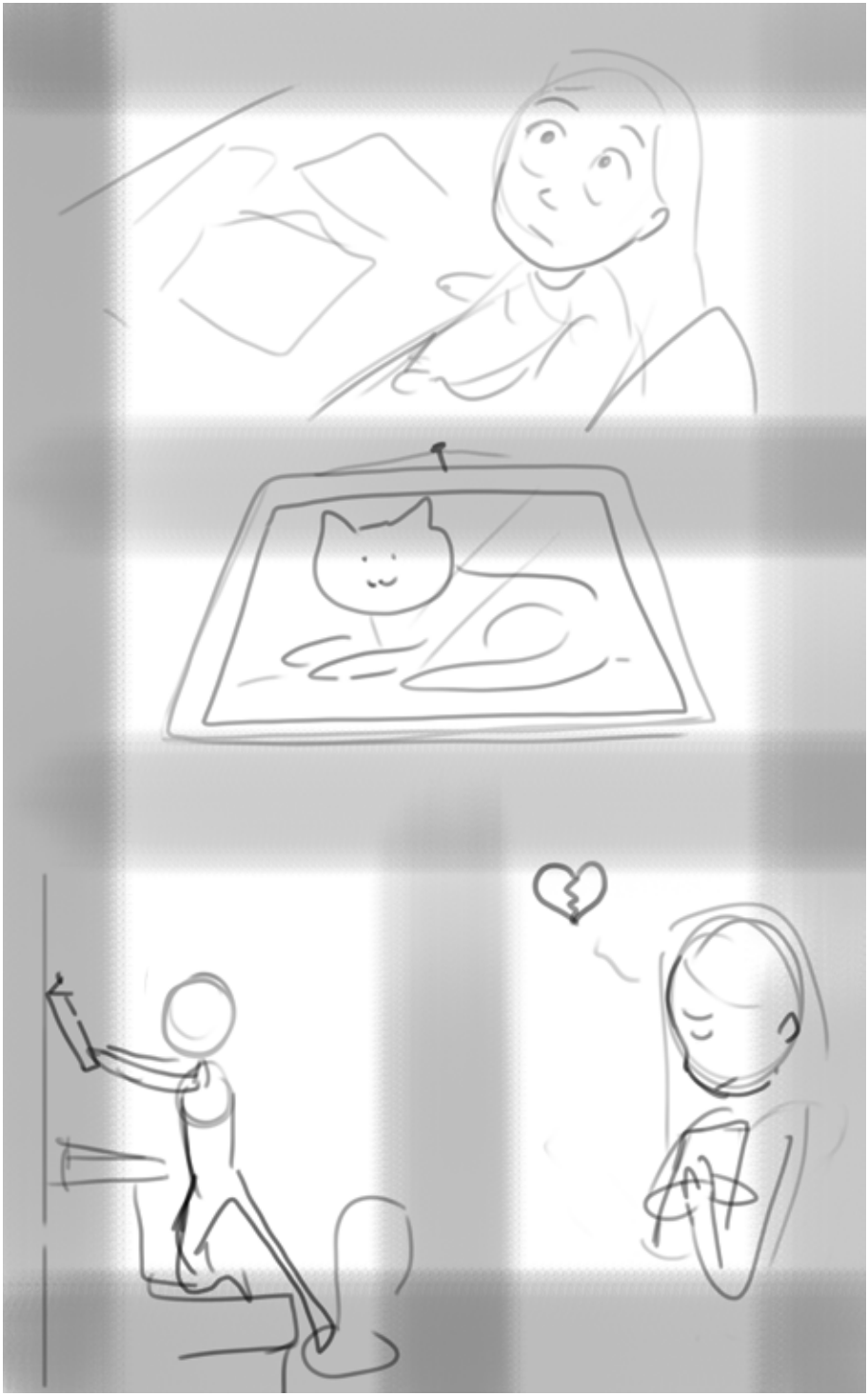
MEOW! MARR-OWW! MEOW!
Hey Pumpkin can hear your voice, want to talk to him?
Pumpkin?
MEOW! MARR-OWW! MEOW!
Yes, let me talk to him.
MARRR-OWWWWW!
Here Pumpkin, it's Raea.
Meow?

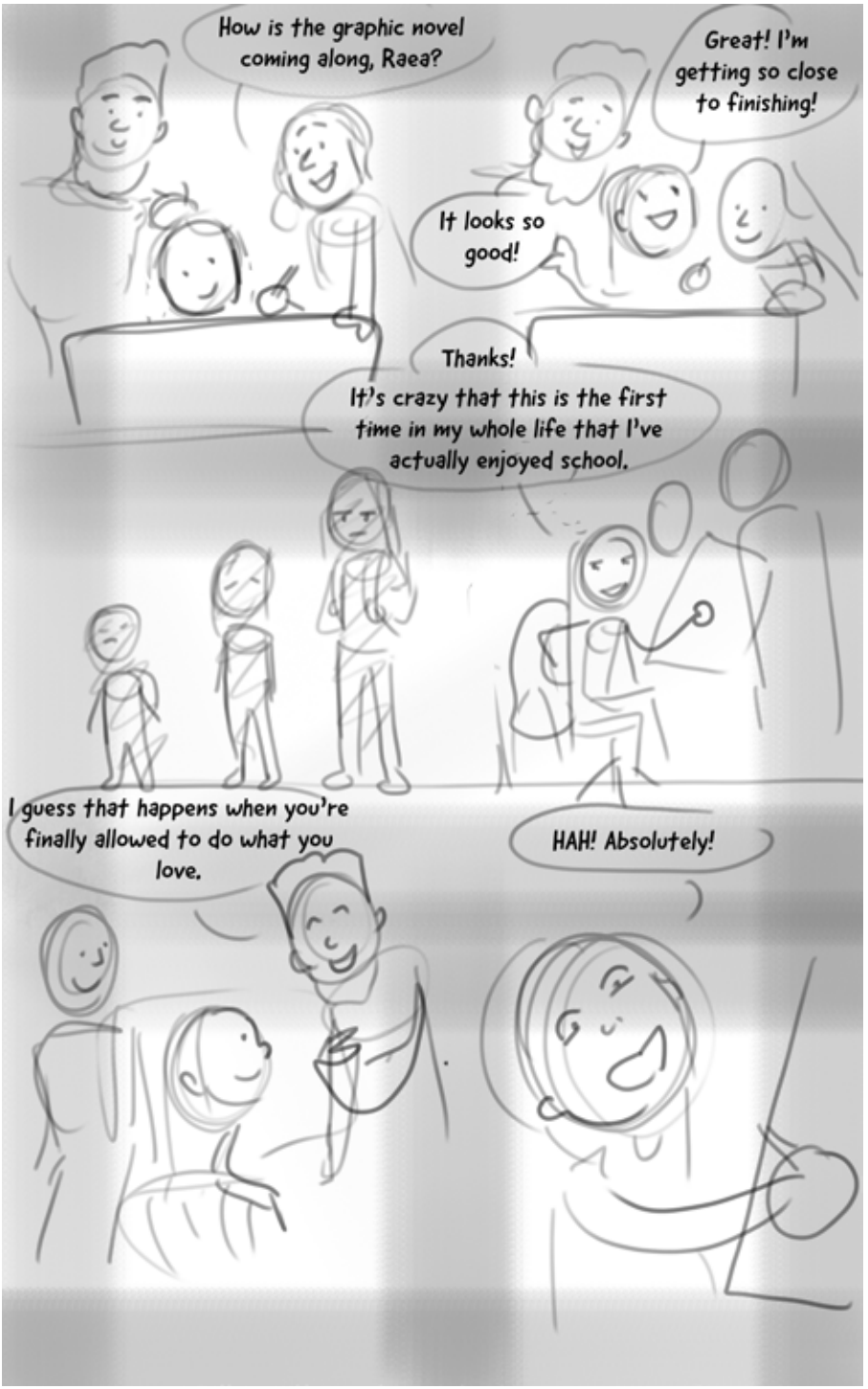
Oh bud...
Mew?
I'm so sorry I left.
Mom told me she will take care of you... but I know it's not the same.
I'm sorry.

Please don't be sad.
Meow?


Meow?
Hssssssss
CRASH!

ZZZ
z z z
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP




How is the graphic novel coming along, Raea?
Great! I'm getting so close to finishing!
It looks so good!
Thanks!
It's crazy that this is the first time in my whole life that I've actually enjoyed school.
I guess that happens when you're finally allowed to do what you love.
HAH! Absolutely!

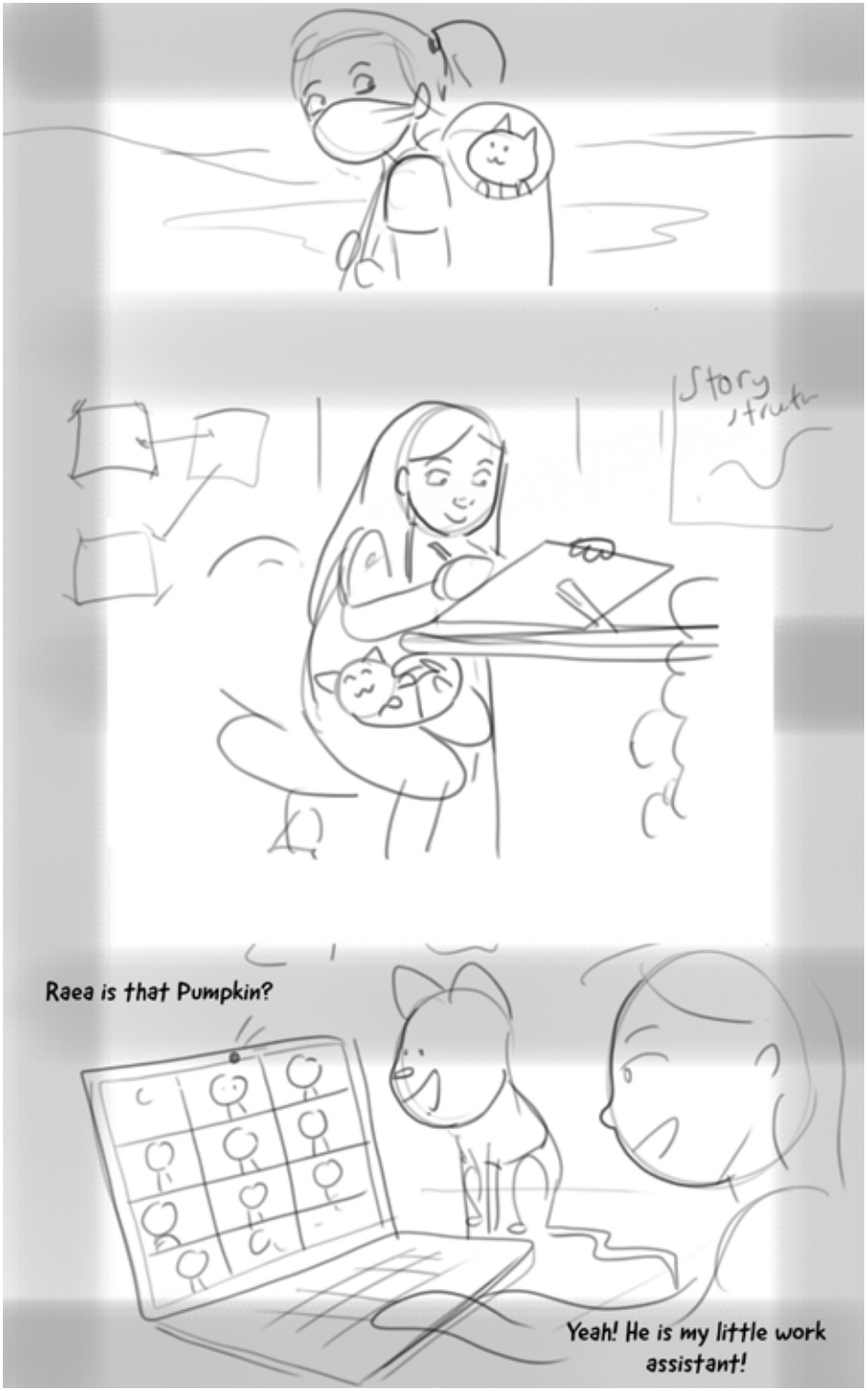
Hey um... Bad news.
They're cancelling school and everyone has to go home.
College

Mom! Dad!
We're back!
WAIT! Where is Pumpkin?

Pumpkin!
Mew?
PUMPKIN!
Meow?

Pumpkin.
MEOW!
You will not believe it, bud. The whole world has shut down because of a virus.
They cancelled school. So it's just you and me, Pumpkin.

But... I don't want to give up on my school project.
It's a graphic novel.
So what do you say bud, do you want to help me finish it?
Whether or not schools, been cancelled?
MEOW!

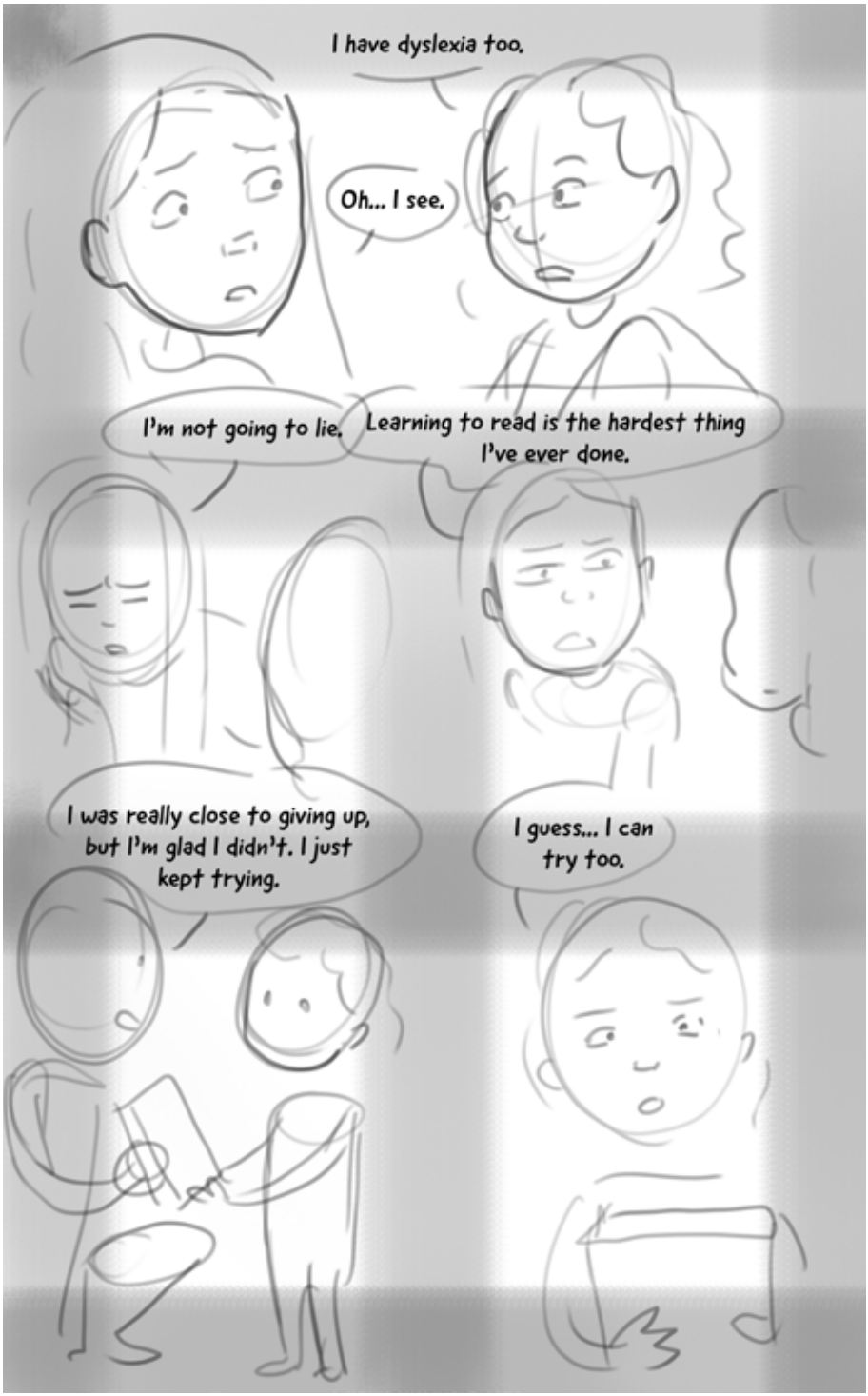

Story structure
Raea is that Pumpkin?
Yeah! He is my little work assistant!

LOOK!
We did it!
Just you and me buddy.
Just like old times.

Today, we have something to celebrate! I'm here with author Raea Gragg.
This is the first time these students can gather together since the start of the pandemic.
Raea, what do you hope these kiddos learn from you?

What's your favorite thing to draw?
Hmm...
Pumpkin my cat. He has actually helped me create every story I've ever made.
Reading, writing and drawing are all powerful and each and every single one of you has a powerful story to tell.
Excuse me.

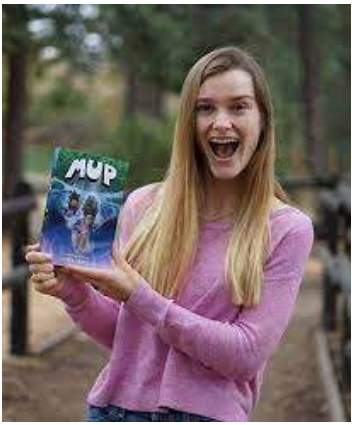
Is it true that you hated reading?
Yeah, it's true.
I don't like reading too.
I HATE IT.
I'm like you.
How so?


I have dyslexia too.
Oh... I see.
I'm not going to lie.
Learning to read is the hardest thing I've ever done.
I was really close to giving up, but I'm glad I didn't. I just kept trying.
I guess... I can try too.

Hey Pumpkin! Look I got a letter!
Dear. Raea Gragg thank you for giving me a copy of MUP.
I don't like reading but I read your book and it's the first book I've ever read. I'm now reading lots of books.
Thank you Emma
Imagine that, Pumpkin...
I'm helping other kids learn to read now.

You know Pumpkin, I've been thinking about it...
If it wasn't for my dyslexia and my vision problems...
...I wouldn't be the person I am today.
And I couldn't have done any of it without you, Pumpkin!
Mew!
Thank you for everything, buddy.
Mew!

Thank you for believing in me.


MUP